00029907

00029907

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC

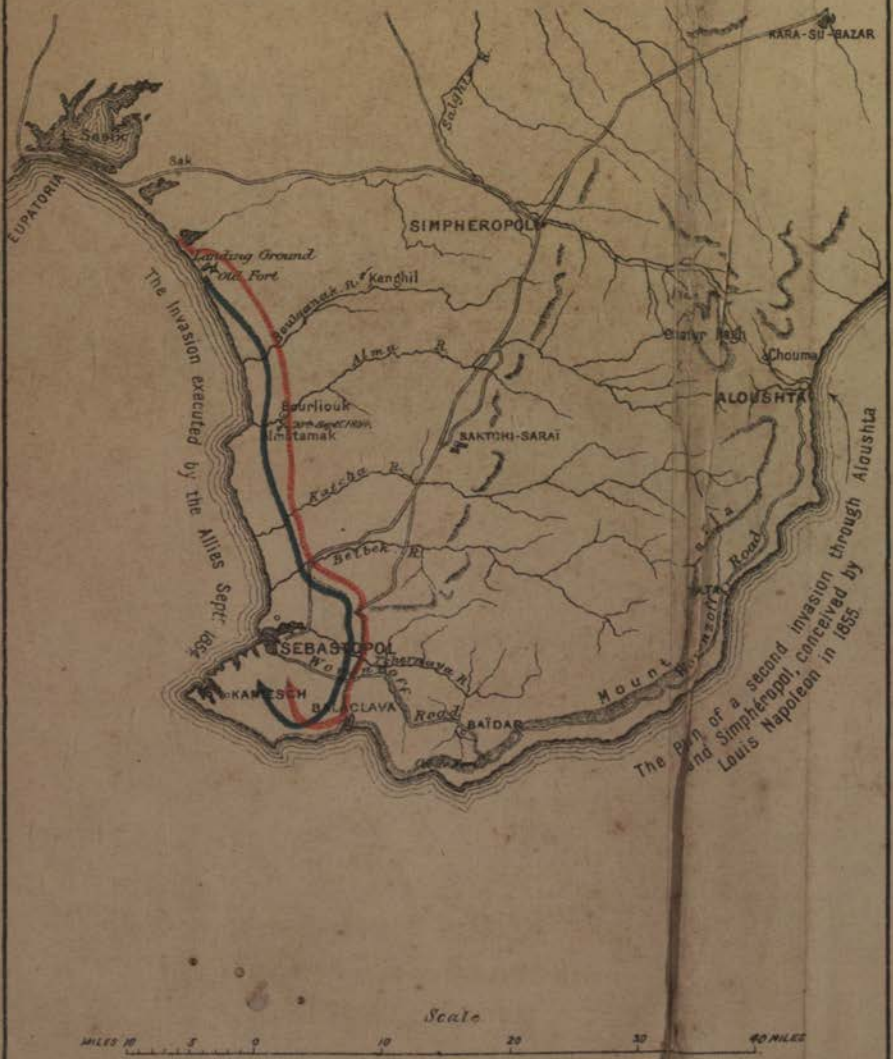
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018

THE

INVASION OF THE CRIMEA.

THE SOUTHERN CRIMEA.



THE

INVASION OF THE CRIMEA:

ITS ORIGIN,

AND

AN ACCOUNT OF ITS PROGRESS

DOWN TO THE DEATH OF

LORD RAGLAN.

By A. W. KINGLAKE.

29907 ac

VOLUME VII.

FROM THE MORROW OF INKERMAN
TO THE FALL OF CANROBERT.

Ref. a. 27

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.
MDCCCLXXXVII.

The Right of Translation is reserved.

2907

CONTENTS OF VOLUME VII.

CHAPTER I.

THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL FROM THE 6TH OF NOVEMBER 1854, TO THE MIDDLE OF THE ENSUING FEBRUARY.

I.

PAGE

The Allies now committed to what might prove a long siege, . 1
The predicament in which they had placed themselves, . . 2
The duress they suffered, ... 2
The bearing of this duress upon their power as combatants, . 3
The task of defence now weighing upon their energies, . . 3
And defence under hard conditions, ... 4
No idea of raising the siege could be well or even prudently harboured, ... 4

II.

The double task now pressing upon the Allies, . . . 5
Their defensive works, ... 5

III.

The designs of the French, though postponed, still pointing to the Flagstaff Bastion, ... 6
Checked in carrying forward their approaches, . . . 6
They resort to mining, ... 6
Extension towards their left of siege-work carried on by the French, 7
The part taken at this time by the English in the work of the siege, 7
The great strain put on their fortitude, ... 8

IV.

One of the advantages conferred on the enemy by giving him time, 9
Todleben's means of drawing advantage from time, . 9

CHAPTER I.—*continued.*

PAGE

As compared with the means which the Allied Engineers could command, ... 10
Todleben's defences, ... 11
His more strictly defensive measures, ... 11
By his strictly defensive measures did he make the fortress secure? 12
His opinion, ... 12

V.

Todleben's measures for averting attack, ... 13
His aggressive batteries, ... 14
His rifle-pits, ... 14
His lodgments, ... 15
His aggressive countermines, ... 16
Petty sorties, ... 17
The strain they put on the guards of the trenches, . . . 17
Novel contrivance resorted to by the Russians when attacking the French in these sorties, ... 17
Indignation of the French army, ... 18
Generous concession to its feeling by Osten-Sacken, . . 18
The sorties always sooner or later repressed with due vigour, . 18
The French guards of the trenches compared with the English, . 18
The enemy encountering our guards of the trenches, . . 19
Without discovering their extreme numerical weakness, . . 19
Departure of Prince Napoleon, ... 20

VI.

Natural reluctance of the French to alter their main plan of siege, . 21
Burgoyne's insistence upon the expediency of assailing the Malakoff, 21
The French at first adverse to his counsels, ... 22
But afterwards more willingly listening to them, . . . 23
Acceptance of Burgoyne's opinion in a Conference of Three, . 23
Step tending in an opposite direction immediately taken by Canrobert, ... 24
His official letter to Lord Raglan, ... 24
Lord Raglan's way of dealing with it, ... 24
The French ultimately reverting to the decision of the 'Three,' . 26
And on certain conditions agreeing to assail the Malakoff front, . 27
The gravity of the dangers thus averted, ... 27
The envoy sent by Lord Raglan to the French headquarters, . 28
Long delay, ... 29
1st and 2d February. Modified plan put forward by the French, . 30
And approved by Lord Raglan, ... 30
But now known to have masked another design, ... 31

CHAPTER I.—*continued.*

VII.

PAGE
Import of the change of plan as first understood by the French, . 31

VIII.

The French mining operations, ... 32
Todleben's skill and power in the science of mining, . . 33
His countermines, ... 33
Progress of the mining and countermining operations, . . 33
Their result, ... 35

IX.

The peremptory part of the besieger's design now shifting from the Flagstaff Bastion to the Malakoff, ... 35

X.

Dispositions consequent upon Canrobert's resolve to operate against the Malakoff, ... 36
The Allies commencing works destined to aid a meditated attack on the Mamelon, ... 37

XI.

Various movements and changes, ... 38
On the part of the Russians, ... 38
On the part of the French, ... 39
Their reconnaissances, ... 39
The treatment experienced by Forey, ... 39
The French breastplates, ... 41
On the part of the English, ... 41
Field-telegraph, ... 41
Railway, ... 41
Command of fleet, ... 41

XII.

Result of the conflict from the 6th of November 1854 to the middle of February 1855, ... 41

XIII.

Questions raised by scientific critics, ... 43

CHAPTER II.

EUPATORIA.

I.

PAGE
Condition of things in Eupatoria and its neighbourhood, . . 45

II.

Assembly of the force under Baron Wrangel, . . . 46
Its task, ... 46
Danger threatening the enemy's communications, . . . 46
Arrival of some Turkish battalions, and soon of Omar Pasha in person, at Eupatoria, ... 47
Question calling for Mentschikoff's decision, . . . 47
His measures, ... 47
Mentschikoff's resolve to have Eupatoria attacked, . . . 48
By forces withdrawn from Baron Wrangel, ... 49
And placed under General Khrouleff, ... 49

III.

The defences and resources of Eupatoria, ... 49
The forces under General Khrouleff now charged to attack Eupatoria, ... 51
Their preparations, ... 51
Their plan in its earlier stages, ... 52

IV.

The engagement of the 17th of February, ... 52
The enemy's acquiescence in this repulse, ... 57

CHAPTER III.

THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS.

The Czar's feelings after his discomfiture before Eupatoria, . . 58
His illness, ... 58
Subsequent rumours, ... 58
Power of grief over the body, ... 58
Official account of the Czar's malady, ... 59
This consistent with the belief that it was brought about by grief, . 59
Sequence of facts, ... 59
Death of the Czar, ... 59
The personal contention thus brought to end, . . . 59
The fate of Nicholas, ... 60
Justice administered to a highly placed criminal, . . . 61

CHAPTER IV.

SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL FROM THE MIDDLE OF FEBRUARY 1855 TO THE SECOND WEEK OF APRIL.

I.

PAGE

Morning of the 22d of February, ... 63
Sight observed by the French, ... 63
Todleben's inferences from what the Allies had been visibly doing, 64
His counteracting plans, ... 65
His Selinghinsk Redoubt, ... 65

II.

French night attack on the Selinghinsk Redoubt, . . . 67
False report of this fight made to Canrobert, . . . 71
Truce for burying the dead, ... 71

III.

Reason of the French for not renewing the attack, . . . 72
The Volhynia Redoubt, ... 72
Continued acquiescence of the French, ... 72
Import and effect of these counter-works on Mount Inkerman, . 72
Decisions of the French on finding themselves thus confronted . 73

IV.

Council assembled, but with little prospect of advantage, . . 73
Council of the 4th of March, ... 74
Adjourned Conference sitting on the 6th of March, . . . 76
8th March. Canrobert renewing his endeavours to obtain Turkish reinforcements, ... 77
Completion and armament of the two White Redoubts, . . 77

V.

Arrival of the young Grand-Dukes Nicholas and Michael, . . 77
The Mamelon, ... 78
Advice of Bizot to Canrobert, ... 78
Declined, ... 78
Night of the 10th of March, Todleben establishing a Work on the Mamelon, ... 78
Sight greeting the French on the morning of the 11th, . . 79
The Kamtchatka Lunette, ... 79
Deliberations of the French in face of this new apparition, . . 79
Their resolve not to assault the new work, ... 79
But to proceed against it by 'approaches,' 79
21st March. Todleben's completion and armament of his Kamtchatka Lunette, ... 80

CHAPTER IV.—*continued.*

VI.

PAGE
Mortifying and perplexing effect of Todleben's counter-works, . 81
Canrobert's reason for declining to seize the Mamelon, . . 81
The vast scope of his objection, ... 81
Its dangerous tendency, ... 82
Niel's comment on the objection, ... 82
Canrobert's determination to abstain from assaulting the embryo Lunette, ... 83
Representation on this subject imparted by Lord Raglan to Canrobert, 83

VII.

The gloomy apprehensions of Canrobert imparted to Lord Raglan, . 84
Lord Raglan's comment, ... 84
And its tendency to relieve his despondency, . . . 84
Lord Raglan's power of repressing despondency, . . . 85
Did this change Canrobert's tone? 85
Allusion to recent disclosures, ... 85

VIII.

Vigorous advance of the French 'approaches' against the new Lunette, ... 86
Anxiety of the enemy to check them, ... 86
His sorties, 22d of March, ... 86
His great sortie against the French, ... 87
The sorties effected against the English siege-works, . . 89
Colonel Kelly's dispositions, ... 90
Zavalichine's flank movement, ... 92
Boudistcheff's attack, ... 92
Charge by Vicars with 70 or 80 men of the 97th, . . . 93
Vicars joined by Kelly and Gordon, ... 93
Defeat of the column, ... 93
Defeat of Zavalichine's column, ... 94
Sound of firing towards the more western part of the Woronzoff Ridge, ... 95
Colonel Kelly taking his measures, ... 95
But wounded and taken prisoner, ... 96
The attack under Astapoff, ... 97
Means of resistance collected, ... 97
Fight at the Mortar Battery, ... 98
Defeat and flight of the Russian column, ... 98
Béruleff's surprise of our advanced siege-works in the Left Attack, 99
Part of the invading force checked by some men of the 21st Fusiliers under Carlton, ... 99

CHAPTER IV.—*continued.*

PAGE

And ultimately retreating before it, ... 100
Russian troops for a while in the two advanced batteries, . . 100
But routed by the men of our working-parties, . . . 100
Comments on the great sortie effected against the French, . . 102

IX.

Great extension given by Todleben to his counter-approaches, . 104
The design of the 1st of January now so far frustrated as to be almost in abeyance, ... 105

X.

The siege operations maintained against the town front, . . 105
And by the English against the Redan and its neighbours, . . 106

XI.

Continuance and final success of General Canrobert's efforts to draw reinforcements from the Turkish army at Eupatoria, . . 106
Arrival of Omar Pasha in person with a large force of Turks, . 107

XII.

Sinking of more Russian ships, ... 107
Death of Nicholas imparted to the Sebastopol garrison, . . 107
Change of Russian commanders, ... 108
Prince M. Gortchakoff, ... 108
What made this a supremely fortunate choice? . . . 108
Admiral Istomine killed, ... 109
Departure of Sir John Burgoyne, ... 109

XIII.

Preparations for a great cannonade, ... 112
Allusion to recent disclosures, ... 112

CHAPTER V.

THE SECRET TERMS OF THE MISSION ENTRUSTED TO GENERAL NIEL.

The French Emperor beginning in secret to interfere with the siege, ... 114
General Niel, ... 115
His opinions on the subject of the war in the Crimea, . . 115

CHAPTER V.—*continued.*

PAGE

The desire of the French Emperor, ... 116
The 'mission' of General Niel, ... 116
Niel's position at the French Headquarters, ... 116
His plan, ... 117
The plan in general conformity with the wish of the French Emperor; and approved by Canrobert, ... 119
Niel's task, ... 120
The army of Canrobert kept secretly under restraint, . . 120
The Emperor's plan put in course of execution, . . . 120
Concealment of the plan from the English, ... 121
And of its 'separate article' from Canrobert, . . . 121
Impressions caused by the prospect of the Emperor's going to the Crimea, ... 121
The concealment from Lord Raglan maintained with continued success, ... 123
Greatness of the difference between the plan concerted with Lord Raglan by Canrobert, and the one framed by Niel, . . 125
The all but inevitable consequence of imparting the Emperor's plan to Canrobert, ... 126
Disloyalty of the concealment practised against the English, . 127
Way in which the Imperial will was brought to bear on Canrobert, 127
No apparent reluctance on the part of Canrobert to be guided by his Emperor's wish, ... 128
Lengthened and baneful incumbency of the Emperor's plan, . 128
Explanations that might be appropriately given by Marshal Canrobert, ... 129
The bare facts, ... 129
The light thrown by this chapter on Canrobert's successive 'abstentions,' 129

CHAPTER VI.

THE APRIL BOMBARDMENT.

I.

Expectations formed by those who were uninitiated in the secret of Niel's Mission, ... 130

II.

Preparation for the April cannonade, ... 132
Counter-preparations by the Russians, ... 133
Conditions placing the Russians at a disadvantage, . . . 133

CHAPTER VI.—*continued.*

III.

PAGE

Opening and continuation of the April bombardment, . . 135
Continuance and general effect of the bombardment, . . 136
Over both the Town front, and the eastern part of the Faubourg, . 136
But not over the intermediate batteries directly confronted by the English, ... 138

IV.

What kept within limits the battering-power of the English, . 138
Incompleteness of some of the English preparatives, . . 139
The Left Attack, ... 139
The arming of its two advanced batteries delayed, . . . 140
The angry impatience thus caused, ... 141
Its apparent effect, ... 142
A coincidence, ... 142
Order given to Captain Oldershaw, ... 142
And executed the same night, ... 143
12th April. The advanced No. VII. completed, and its guns before sunset engaged with the enemy, ... 143
Decision said to have been based on observation of this encounter, 144

V.

The two advanced batteries of our Left Attack, . . . 144
The 'advanced No. VII.,' 144
The enemy's accustomed way of dealing with an advanced battery, 145
Great, yet insufficient strength of its parapet, . . . 147
The ways of a cannon-ball when obstructed, without being stopped, 147
The 'advanced No. VIII.', ... 150

VI.

The order directing Captain Oldershaw to engage the 'advanced No. 'VII. battery' on the 13th of April, ... 150
Captain Oldershaw, ... 150
Entering the battery, ... 152
Its state, ... 152
Sir Gerald Graham, ... 152
His account of what the battery confronted, . . . 153
The fight, ... 154
The losses sustained in Oldershaw's battery, . . . 166
General Dacres, ... 167
His words to Oldershaw, ... 167
An order given out by mistake, ... 168
And the touching incident to which it gave rise, . . . 169

CHAPTER VI.—*continued.*

VII.

PAGE
Ground for laying full stress on the fight of the 13th of April, . 170
Sir Gerald Graham, ... 171
His judgment of Oldershaw's fight, ... 171

VIII.

Both the advanced Nos. VII. and VIII. batteries got ready for fighting on the morning of the 14th, ... 172
Engagement of the No. VII. battery under Captain Henry on morning of the 14th of April, ... 172
Simultaneous engagement of the No. VIII. battery, under Captain Walcott, on the morning of the 14th, ... 174
The engagements in the Nos. VII. and VIII. batteries on the 14th continued by the reliefs until dark, ... 177

IX.

What put limits on the bombardment, ... 178
Consumption of siege-gun ammunition, ... 178
Losses of men sustained by the Allies in the artillery conflict, . 178
Large proportion of the losses sustained by our sailors, . . 178
Their ways whilst manning a battery, ... 179

X.

The defenders of Sebastopol, ... 180
Their Easter festivities mingling with the fights in the batteries, . 180
The fortitude they needed for their task, ... 180
Their want of ammunition, ... 180
The sacrifices they had to make in order to be ready to meet assaults, 181
The heroism of their defence at this time, ... 181
Supplies of ammunition and reinforcements, ... 183
The tasks which the defence of Sebastopol at this time involved, . 183
The two White Redoubts crushed and silenced, and not repaired, . 184
But still not assaulted by the French, ... 185
The Malakoff covered by counter-approaches, and not therefore strongly assailed, ... 185
The Kamtchatka Lunette brought to ruin, ... 185
Not, however, assaulted by the French, ... 186
But still 'approached' by their sap, ... 186
Complete failure of the English batteries against the Great Redan, 186
The Town Front, ... 186
The Russians imagining the French to be resolute, and determined to seize the Flagstaff Bastion, ... 187
Havoc sustained by the Flagstaff Bastion and its auxiliaries on the first day, ... 187

CHAPTER VI.—*continued.*

PAGE

So, on the second day, ... 188
So, on the third day, ... 188
So, on the fourth day, ... 189
So, on the fifth day, ... 189
So, on the sixth day, ... 189
State of Flagstaff Bastion, ... 189
The great effort made to repair it, ... 189
Peril of the Bastion on the seventh day, ... 189
On the eighth day, ... 190
On the ninth day, ... 190
On the tenth day, ... 190
Desperate state of Bastion, ... 190
Cessation of the general bombardment, ... 191
Flag of truce. Compliments exchanged between French and Russian officers, ... 191
'Siege of Troy,' 191
Continuation of the bombardment directed against the Flagstaff Bastion and its auxiliaries, ... 191
Their peril on the 21st of April, ... 192

XI.

Question whether the bombardment opened paths for assault, . 192
Answered by the facts, and by the authoritative opinion of General Todleben, ... 192
The bombardment achieved its set purpose, ... 194
But, not being followed up, it resulted in harm to the Allies, . 195
Todleben's inquiry, ... 195
The clue, ... 195

CHAPTER VII.

THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL (WITH EXCLUSION OF THE APRIL BOMBARDMENT, ALREADY NARRATED) FROM THE 9TH OF APRIL TO THE MIDDLE OF MAY.

I.

Bizot mortally wounded, ... 196
And succeeded after an interval by Niel, ... 198
The French opening ground by mines in front of the Flagstaff Bastion, 198
And there forming a 4th Parallel, ... 199
The tendency of this successful exploit to embarrass Canrobert and Niel, ... 200
Todleben's encroachments in front of the Central Bastion, . . 201

CHAPTER VII.—*continued.*

PAGE
Canrobert's unwillingness to resist them, ... 201
This, however, overcome, ... 202
Pélissier, ... 202
Not brooking the encroachments against his own front, . . 202
The anomaly thence resulting, ... 203
Fights for the Cimetière Lodgments, ... 203
Resulting, after some days, in the definitive success of the French, 204
Todleben's project for a new work of counter-approach, . . 204
The fighting for lodgments constructed in furtherance of the project, 204
The Sousdal Counter-guard, ... 205
Brilliant attack by the French on the Sousdal Counter-guard, . 206
And capture of the Work, ... 206
Resulting in the complete success of the French, . . . 207
Losses sustained in the night combat of the 1st of May, . . 207
Canrobert apologising for this victorious exploit, . . . 208
The Sousdal Counter-guard converted into a French Work, . 208
And held fast, ... 208
The fighting for lodgments in front of 'Gordon's Attack,' . . 208
Egerton's achievement, ... 209
His death, ... 210
His fame, ... 210
The praises bestowed by Lord Raglan on the troops taking part in this combat, ... 211
The losses it caused our people, ... 211
The night sorties during this period, ... 211
A reconnaissance by Omar Pasha, ... 212
Why recorded, ... 213
Submarine telegraph connecting the Chersonese with Varna, . 213
Its counterbalancing mischiefs, ... 213
The Eupatoria cable, ... 213
The accession of 15,000 Sardinian troops under General de la Marmora, 213

CHAPTER VIII.

TROUBLED COUNSELS OF THE FRENCH.

I.

Tendency of a successful bombardment to derange the working of Niel's 'mission,' 216
Canrobert ignoring the success of the bombardment, . . 217

II.

Conference of 14th April, ... 218
Disposition on the part of the French, except Pélissier, to stop the bombardment, ... 218

CHAPTER VIII.—*continued.*

PAGE

But successfully combated by Lord Raglan and Lyons, . . 218
A slight relaxation of the fetters imposed on Canrobert by Niel's 'mission,' 218
The miserable instruction given to Canrobert by his Emperor, . 220
Canrobert's state of mind, ... 220
The conduct and bearing of Niel, ... 220
His letter of the 16th of April to the Minister of War, . . 221
No termination of the secrecy which had shrouded Niel's 'mission,' 222
16th April. Agreement made between Canrobert and Lord Raglan, 222
But abandoned three days afterwards by Canrobert, . . 223
17th April. Letter from Niel to the Emperor, . . . 223

III.

Ebullition of warlike impatience on the part of the French army, . 224
Canrobert either sharing the feeling or hurried along by it, . 224
Niel, ... 224
23d April. The French ostensibly ready to assault, . . 225
Preliminary conference, ... 226
Evening of the 23d, ... 226
Agreement between Canrobert and Lord Raglan for a general assault of Sebastopol, ... 226
Lord Raglan's impression, ... 226

IV.

General Canrobert's apparently uneasy state, . . . 227
His letter next day (24th April) to the Emperor, . . . 227
Niel writing to the Emperor at the same time, . . . 227
The Emperor's account of the two letters, . . . 227
Morning of 25th. Canrobert resolved to put off the assault, . 228
The interview between Niel and Lord Raglan, . . . 228
Course taken by Lord Raglan, ... 229
25th April. Canrobert's letter putting off the attack, . . 230
Lord Raglan's observation on the French change of counsel, . 230
Circumstances under which the letter to Bruat was put forward, . 231
Weight due to the letter of the 7th of April, . . . 232

V.

The previous concealment from Canrobert, ... 232

VI.

Uncertainty as to the duration of the postponement, . . . 234
Canrobert's idea of its scope, ... 234
The old fetters refastened upon him, ... 235

CHAPTER IX.

THE NOW ACTIVELY PERTURBING INTERFERENCE OF LOUIS NAPOLEON IN THE WAR FOR SEBASTOPOL.

I.

PAGE
The hitherto paralysing interference of the French Emperor, . 236
Now changed into actively perturbing dictation, . . . 236
His visit to England, ... 236
The Council of War at Windsor Castle, ... 237
The Emperor's resolve to join his army, ... 237
His agreement with our Government upon preliminary questions, . 237

II.

The Emperor's proposals, ... 238
Acceptance by our Government of the preliminary arrangements, . 239
As recorded at Buckingham Palace, ... 239

III.

The Emperor's plan of campaign, ... 239
His plan as regarded the '1st army of operation,' . . . 239
That not objected to by our Government, ... 240
The Emperor's plan as regarded the '2d army of operation,' . 240
Opinion formed by our Government of that last part of the plan, . 241
General purport of the entire plan, ... 241

IV.

The Emperor abandoning his intention of going out to the Crimea, 242
His letter of instruction to Canrobert, ... 242

V.

3d of May. The Generals in the Crimea acquainted with the imperial plan, ... 245
The joy of Lord Panmure, ... 246

VI.

The frail basis on which it all rested, ... 247

CHAPTER X.

THE INTERPOSITION OF THE FRENCH EMPEROR CONTINUING AND BRINGING ABOUT THE RECALL OF A JOINT EXPEDITION.

I.

PAGE
Project for opening a passage into the Sea of Azof, . . . 249
The Straits of Kertch, ... 249

II.

The enemy's endeavours to guard them, ... 250
The Peninsula of Kertch, ... 251
Baron Wrangel there in command, ... 251
His forces, ... 251
The task set before him, ... 251
His dispositions, ... 252

III.

The eagerness of the English to have the attack set on foot, . 254
General Canrobert's assent to it, ... 254
His subsequent doubts and objections, ... 254
Lord Raglan's masterly answer to him, ... 255
Canrobert deferring to Lord Raglan, ... 256

IV.

Sailing of the expedition on the 3d of May, . . . 256

V.

The Submarine Cable, ... 257

VI.

Telegrams from Paris, ... 259
Night of the 3d of May, ... 259
Canrobert's visit to Lord Raglan with a new telegram, . . 259
Discussion between the two commanders, ... 260
Its result, ... 261
2.15 A.M. Arrival of aide-de-camp with yet another telegram, . 261
And letter from Canrobert declaring himself, . . . 262
Compelled to recall Admiral Bruat, ... 262
Reception of this by Lord Raglan, ... 262

VII.

Venturesome course taken by Lord Raglan, ... 263
The latitude he gave to Sir George Brown, ... 265

CHAPTER X.—*continued.*

PAGE

VIII. 265

IX.

Return of the expedition, ... 268
Feelings excited by its recall, ... 269
On board the flotilla, ... 269
In Constantinople, ... 270
On the fleets and the troops, ... 271
Canrobert's account of the recall, ... 272
The justice due to him, ... 273

X.

Letter from the French Emperor, ... 274
In explanation of the course he had taken, ... 274
Comment on the letter, ... 275

CHAPTER XI.

THE EMPEROR'S DICTATION RESISTED, THE COLLAPSE OF HIS PLAN, AND THE RESIGNATION OF CANROBERT.

I.

Canrobert and Niel proposing consideration of the Emperor's plan, ... 277
Course taken by Lord Raglan, ... 278
His opinion of the plan, ... 278
And of what would be the right course, ... 279

II.

Pélissier's letter of the 5th of May, ... 279
Wholesome bearing of the letter upon the counsels of the Allies, . 281
Corollary resulting from the letter in its bearing upon the Past, . 281
Pélissier's growing ascendant, ... 282
Contrast, ... 283
Effect of the letter, ... 283

III.

Expositions of the Emperor's plan now before the Commanders, . 283
The duties it assigned to Canrobert and Pélissier, . . . 283
12th May. The three allied Commanders in Conference, . . 284

CHAPTER XI.—*continued.*

PAGE

14th May, renewed Conference. Lord Raglan prevailing, . . 284
Agreement as to plan of field operations, ... 285
But no further, ... 285
Canrobert peremptorily refusing to guard the English trenches, . 285
Omar Pasha also refusing, ... 286
The consequences of these refusals, ... 286
Lord Raglan's mortification, ... 286
Rejection of plan, ... 286
An anomaly, ... 287
Canrobert's idea that the English army might be split into two, . 287
The Emperor's plan exposed to contact with realities, . . 288
With what result, ... 288
Statement by Canrobert that he was going to take the field, . 289
Duration of the harm done by General Niel's 'mission,' . . 289

IV.

General Canrobert's first endeavour to rid himself of the command, 290
16th April. His second endeavour, ... 291
His resignation tendered, ... 291
Strange interposition of Niel, ... 291
Canrobert's command given up and transferred to Pélissier, . 292
Assigned causes of Canrobert's resignation, ... 292
The merit of Canrobert's self-sacrifice, ... 294
The lesson apparently taught him by Pélissier's letter, . . 294
Feeling of the French army towards Canrobert, . . . 295
The 'morale' of the French army under Canrobert, . . . 295
Opinions of Canrobert expressed by men in authority, . . 297
Effect of recent disclosures on Canrobert's reputation, . . 299

CHAPTER XII.

THE RELATIONS OF AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA WITH THE BELLIGERENTS.—THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH RUSSIA.—THE AUSTRIAN PROPOSALS.—THEIR REJECTION ENTAILING A CHANGE OF AUSTRIA'S POLICY.

I.

The union of Austria and Prussia with the Western Powers, . 301
Its anomalous character, ... 302
Its efficacy for the first proposed object, ... 303
Tendency of this too speedy success, ... 304
The danger increased by another cause, ... 304
The defection of Prussia, ... 305
The loyal course taken by Austria, ... 307

CHAPTER XII.—*continued.*

II.

PAGE

Step taken by Austria which made a beginning of her mediation, . 309
Course taken at first by the Czar Nicholas, ... 309
And afterwards, ... 309
His acceptance of the Four Conditions, ... 309
Treaty of the 2d of December 1854, ... 310
Preliminary negotiations for the Conference, ... 310
Exclusion of Prussia from the Conferences, ... 311
Question as to the effect of Nicholas's death on the prospects of peace, ... 312

III.

The Peace Negotiations at Vienna, ... 313
Lord John Russell, ... 313
Prince Alexander Gortchakoff, ... 316
M. Drouyn de Lhuys, ... 317
Debates in the Conference, ... 317
Compared with the mere adduced 'reasons,' the actual stress of the 'motives,' 322
Failure of the Peace negotiations carried on between the belligerents, ... 327

IV.

The Austrian proposals, ... 328
Allusions to a subsequent attack on Lord John Russell, . . 328
The Third of the three Austrian plans, ... 330
The dead-lock in front of Sebastopol, ... 332
The need that there was for effecting a new move against Russia, . 334
The lever to be found at Vienna, ... 334
Neglect of this by the Rulers in Paris and London, . . 335
But not by De Lhuys and Lord John, ... 335
The tendency and value of the measure, ... 336
De Lhuys, ... 337
Lord John Russell, ... 337
Reception of this plan by Lord Palmerston's Cabinet, . . 338
And by the French Emperor, ... 338
Pronounced difference in the counsels of the Western Powers, . 339
The French Emperor and Lord Cowley, ... 339
Marshal Vaillant, ... 340
His words, ... 341
Their sudden effect, ... 341
Resignation of De Lhuys, ... 342
Unaccepted resignations of Lord John Russell, . . . 342

CHAPTER XII.—*continued.*

PAGE

Unanimity after the 5th of May of the English Cabinet, . . 342
The Governments of France and England once more in substantial accord, ... 343
Opening for the new policy suggested by Vaillant, . . . 343
The soundness of Vaillant's conclusion, ... 343
The course of duty prescribed to D. de Lhuys and Lord John, . 344
What they did, ... 345
Vote of the House of Commons, ... 347
The Conference kept formally open until the 4th of June, . . 347
And then closed, ... 347

V.

Change brought about by the rejection of the Austrian proposals, . 348
Austria set free to change her course, ... 348
The course she rightly took, ... 348

APPENDIX.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I.

1. Outnumbered by tens of thousands, ... 351
2. On General Bosquet's front, ... 351
3. Only by hundreds, ... 351
4. Of the Flagstaff Bastion, ... 352
5. Minor pieces of ordnance, ... 352
6. Only 290 men, ... 352
7. At the object kept always in sight, ... 352
8. Against the Malakoff front, ... 353
9. Happily able to accept the condition imposed, . . . 353
10. Till the latter part of the month, ... 354
11. Words described as 'Instructions,' 354
12. Other mortal then living, ... 354
13. Spreading system of countermines, ... 354
14. Unleashed a camouflet, ... 354
15. The intervening Mamelon, ... 355
16. Did the work, ... 355
17. Destroying the Inkerman Bridge, ... 355

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV.

1. With their blows, ... 355
2. Lost their way in the darkness, ... 356

APPENDIX—*continued.*

PAGE

3. Had been victoriously achieved, ... 356
4. Without a simultaneous advance on the Malakoff front, . 356
5. Not again to attempt to drive the enemy from their new works, 356
6. For which he was yearning, ... 357
7. With grossly inadequate means, ... 357
8. Were 'postulates' rather than facts, ... 357

NOTES TO CHAPTER V.

1. 14th February 1855, ... 358
2. Begun and continued, ... 359
3. Lasting success, ... 359
4. By 'approaches,' 359
5. To Vaillant, 8th February 1855, ... 360

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI.

1. Grave affair, ... 360
2. See Appendix, Note (²), ... 361
3. Enthusiasm, ... 362
4. Camel, ... 363
5. Battery, ... 363
6. 'To retire,' 363
7. To Oldershaw, ... 364
8. Came to an end, ... 364
9. Strength of only three men, ... 365
10. Any less formal document, ... 365
11. Under him, ... 366
12. To make the truth known, ... 366
13. Engaged under them, ... 368
14. The fire of the two 'advanced batteries,' . . . 369
15. Defence of Sebastopol, ... 369

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII.

1. Might not after all be unwise, ... 370
2. Somewhat unscrupulous, ... 371
3. Always thoroughly cordial, ... 371

NOTE TO CHAPTER VIII.

1. To be attempted, ... 371

APPENDIX—*continued.*

NOTES TO CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

1. This part of the plan, ... 372
2. Take effect by surprise, ... 372
3. Or otherwise into the sea, ... 373
4. To avert the catastrophe, ... 373

NOTES TO CHAPTER X.

1. Into full play, ... 374
2. Could not divine, ... 374
3. In their rear, ... 374

NOTES TO CHAPTER XI.

1. Campaigning Plan, ... 375
2. To act in the field, ... 375
3. The hopes he had entertained of being attacked by the enemy on the reopening of the bombardment, . . . 375

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Map	I.	The Southern Crimea, . . .	*Frontispiece*
,,	II.	The French Lines of Countervallation, .	*to facc* page 4
,,	III.	Eupatoria. The Russians repulsed by the Turks, 17th February 1855, . . .	,, ,, 48
,,	IV.	Diagram illustrating the design and purpose of Todleben's Counter-approaches in the Faubourg of the Karabelnaya, . . .	,, ,, 64
,,	V.	The Great Night Sortie of the 22d of March, showing positions reached by the Assailants,	,, ,, 86
,,	VI.	Scene of Captain Oldershaw's Fight in the "Advanced No. 7" on the 13th of April, .	,, ,, 144
,,	VII.	Scene of the Fights maintained by Pélissier before his accession to the supreme command.—The Counter-approaches in front of the Central Bastion down to the 1st of May, . .	,, ,, 204
,,	VIII.	The Country between Aloushta and Simpheropol in illustration of the French Emperor's plan,	,, ,, 240
,,	IX.	The Kertchine Peninsula, . . .	,, ,, 250

FROM THE MORROW OF INKERMAN TO THE FALL OF CANROBERT.

CHAPTER I.

THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL FROM THE 6TH OF NOVEMBER 1854, TO THE MIDDLE OF THE ENSUING FEBRUARY.

I.

CHAP. I.

The Allies now committed to what might prove a long siege.

By following the course they approved on the morrow of 'Inkerman,' the Allies did more than make waste of that onward momentum which victory is wont to confer;* for they even, as we saw, gave their adversary the priceless respite he needed for his Flagstaff Bastion;† and not judging the Sebastopol front to be anywhere else in a state that could warrant assault, they now found their armies committed to what—unless roughly cut short by recurrence to bold resolves, or by some grave disaster befalling them—seemed destined to prove a long siege.

* See *ante*, vol. v. p. 480 *et seq.*, and also note to chap. i. vol. vi.

† See *ante*, vol. v. pp. 34, 35, and 480.

CHAP. I.

The predicament in which they had placed themselves.

Yet, to any such task as that of putting stress on Sebastopol by what men in general mean when they speak of a 'siege,' the Allies were then wholly unequal. They had been guided into their troubles by accomplished, highly skilled engineers, but of those there were none who at first saw whither their counsels were tending;* and thus it resulted — anomalously — that by great scientific advisers they had been not only led by degrees into what was an ugly predicament, but also into open rebellion against the first precepts of Science. Instead of approaching their object with that huge preponderance of numbers—before Vauban's time ten to one —which Science had declared to be needed for the reduction of a fortress, they were themselves on the contrary outnumbered by tens of thousands; (1) and far from having the power to fold their coils round the place after the manner of normal besiegers, they had confessed themselves unable to invest it at all on the north, whilst even too on the south—their own chosen side of the Roadstead—they were leaving the enemy free to come in and go out as he chose.

The duress they suffered.

And whilst thus altogether unable to beleaguer Sebastopol, the Allies were in some sort beleaguered. Confronting them—and this at close quarters—with the garrison part of his forces now strongly entrenched, the Russian commander there leant upon the resources of a vast naval arsenal, and a fleet

* See vol. iii. chap. xi. Men thought they could use battering-guns, and even give those guns cover, without sliding into a 'siege.'

broken up for land-service, whilst—left free, as he was, to communicate with Simpheropol, Odessa, St Petersburg—he could always be drawing new strength from the Muscovite empire at large, and moreover could wield at his pleasure the army he always kept imminent in the open field.

By a part of that Russian field-army on their flank, and the garrison of Sebastopol entrenched along their whole front, the Allies, as we saw, had allowed themselves to be completely hemmed in on the land side; and how they thus became hampered in the task of supplying their armies, we already have painfully learnt;* but the bearing that this duress had upon their powers as combatants must not the less be remembered.

The bearing of this duress upon their power as combatants.

So long as they had been able to promise themselves that within a few days they would break their way into Sebastopol, the duress they suffered could of course be regarded as only a brief restraint to be followed by a dazzling conquest well fitted to end all their troubles; but the moment they had resolved that the crisis of their enterprise should be indefinitely put off, this Chersonese on which they had lighted, as though it were simply their stepping-stone, seemed thenceforth rather their prison. With their 'parallels' 'first,' 'second,' and 'third,' and all their siege apparatus, they still had the air of assailants, yet were not in reality minded to risk striking any prompt blow; and on the other hand now, they lived subject to whatever might be

The task of defence now weighing upon their energies;

* *Ante*, vol. vi., chaps. i. v. vi. vii. and viii.

CHAP. I.

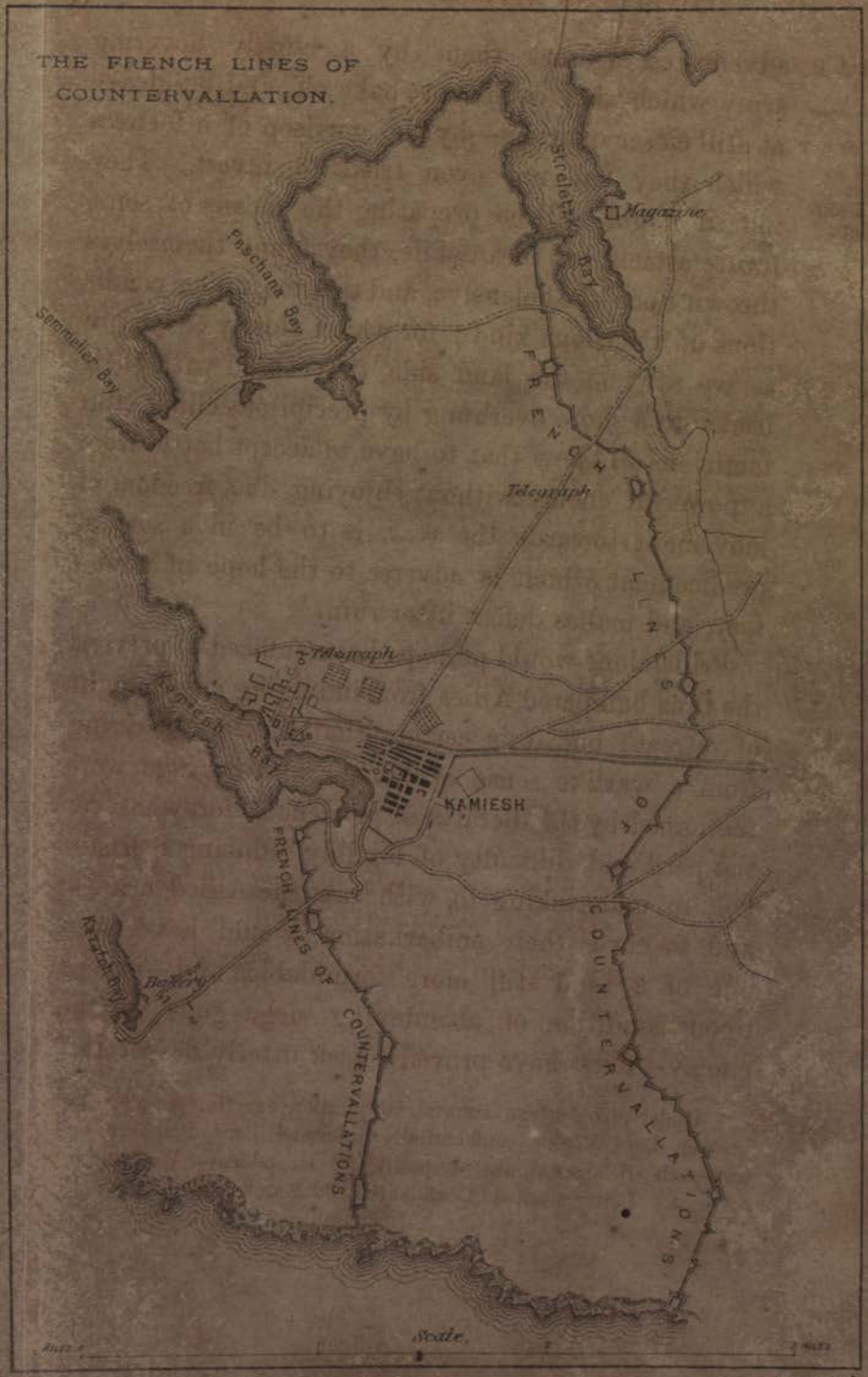
adventured against them by a closely hovering army which they could not shake off, and besides—at still closer quarters—by the garrison of a fortress which they had not even tried to invest. They indeed might still be preparing the means of some future attack, but meanwhile, they found themselves thrown upon the defensive, and this too, under conditions of a perilous kind; for whilst closely cooped in as we saw, on the land side, they stood with their backs to a shore overhung by precipitous cliffs; and tacticians all know that to have to accept battle from a powerful enemy without enjoying due freedom of movement towards the rear, is to be in a sort of predicament which is adverse to the hope of a victory, and makes defeat utter ruin.

and defence under hard conditions.

Pride alone would perhaps have sufficed to prevent the thus hampered Allies from indulging any thought of retreat; but it is certain that motives deriving from a warlike sense of honour and courage were reinforced by the dictates of prudence; for, whatever the peril and difficulty of forcibly reducing Sebastopol, an undertaking to withdraw the Allied armies, and to cover their embarkation, would have been one of a kind still more formidable, and—except upon condition of abandoning siege-guns to the enemy—must have proved a task utterly desperate.*

No idea of raising the siege could be well or even prudently harboured.

* Under stress of an imprudent question exacting a categorical answer, Lord Raglan confidentially informed Lord Panmure that any such withdrawal was 'impossible.' He added—'We have no 'retreat.' Letter marked 'Confidential,' 3d March 1855.


THE FRENCH LINES OF
COUNTERVALLATION.
Streletzkaya Bay
Magazine
Paschana Bay
Sammalice Bay
FRENCH
Telegraph
Telegraph
KAMIESH
FRENCH LINES OF COUNTERVALLATIONS
COUNTERVALLATIONS
Battery
Scale.

II.

The double task now pressing upon the Allies.

So, because the Allies were now minded to defer their assault of Sebastopol, it did not at all therefore follow that, by coming to such a resolve, they had purchased the bliss of repose; for their now doubly aiming exertions were not only henceforth addressed to the object of an ulterior attack, but also—and this with great diligence—to the more instant task of defence.

Their defensive works.

Imagining that the enemy might some day renew his great enterprise of the 5th of November, they constructed, they armed, they maintained defensive works on Mount Inkerman; they threw up works of countervallation on their left; they perfected the eastern and north-eastern defences of Balaclava, and even strengthened yet further the hardly assailable lines which crested the Sapounè Heights on General Bosquet's front. (2) They still indeed aimed a great proportion of their labours at the capital object of some day reducing Sebastopol; but even where so applied, their efforts tended also to guard them against apprehended attacks, because the maintenance of their attitude as apparently determined assailants helped largely to keep unimpaired the moral strength and weight of their armies, whilst moreover their long chain of siege-works, though of course designed for attack, was also a formidable barrier in the way of any armed force coming out from the place to assail them, and therefore formed part of the means

CHAP. I.

by which they were able to hope that any new Russian onslaught directed against their 'approaches' might be either averted or baffled. Thus — even more largely than observers might judge at first sight—self-defence entered into the motives which impelled the now harassed Allies to toil day and night at their works.

III.

The designs of the French, though postponed, still pointing to the Flagstaff Bastion.

It was still by the Flagstaff Bastion that the French at this time were hoping they might, some day, break into Sebastopol. Because baffled by conditions which made it seem unduly hazardous to attempt such a step, they did not indeed try to lessen the distance of some 180 yards which still parted their most advanced trench from the counterscarp of the opposite Bastion, and on the contrary,

Checked in carrying forward their approaches,

resigned themselves to the plan of constructing their foremost batteries on the line they had reached (at night) between the 2d and the 3d of November; but they did their full utmost to perfect the third parallel then opened, to give it due extension at the flanks, and prepare to break down by over-dominant metal the fire that threatened to rage against any column advancing to storm and capture the Work.

they resort to mining.

As is usual with besiegers when stayed in their task of pushing forward 'approaches' by trench-work, the French with great diligence resorted to the expedient of mining.

CHAP. I.

The besiegers by this time had learnt, yet were day by day learning more thoroughly, that—because each opposite bastion was so placed and so armed for duty towards its neighbour as to be effectively subserving the principle of 'mutual support'—they must choose a wider 'front for attack' than at first appeared to be necessary; and the French by degrees got to see that their own special task (as distinguished from that of our people) must be made to include a great extension of siege-work towards their left. They therefore not only made ready to deal with the 'Central' as well as the 'Flagstaff' Bastion, but became step by step the besiegers of all the Sebastopol front from the line of the Woronzoff Road to the edge of the Quarantine Bay.

Extension towards their left of siege-work carried on by the French.

The French also very well understood that, because the Flagstaff Bastion drew support from the Barrack Battery and the Great Redan, they would need once again some such aid on their right as Lord Raglan had been able to give them on the day of the first bombardment; but for the siege-like co-operation thus wanted they looked, as before, to the English, and our people, with small and decreasing resources, and difficult ground before them, were unable to execute earth-works upon any scale matching the greatness of Todleben's new creations. To maintain, to improve, and a little advance their approaches, to confront now and then with new batteries an enemy ever restless and aggressive in his use of the pick-axe and spade, and finally to prepare for the object of supporting the French on their right, if ever, in

The part taken at this time by the English in the work of the siege.

CHAP. I.

the future, disposed to assault the Flagstaff Bastion—this was all that in the way of siege-work our people were able to do. They did no less than their utmost; yet in face of the mighty defences by this time piled up before them they could not at all make sure, nay indeed could scarce venture to hope that they would once more be able to win for the French such immunity in the direction of their right front as was given them—though given in vain—on that 17th of October when under the fire of our guns the Malakoff Tower was silenced and the Great Redan lay in ruins.

The great strain put on their fortitude.

Only those who have formed some conception of the hardships undergone by our army at the time of the 'Winter Troubles' will fully imagine the strain that was put on its fortitude by the exigencies of siege-work and continuous strife with the enemy, superadded to the bare task of living or painfully trying to live;* yet sometimes it happened that the nature, though not the extent, of the struggle maintained, and the imperious domination of military exigencies over other dire needs, could almost be learnt at a glance. In the midst of its most grievous straits for want of other means of land-transport, one might too often count several hundreds of our weary soldiery—every man of them heavily laden—painfully employed in carrying up the supplies over miles and miles of deep quagmire, whilst also, and at the very same time, might be seen on the track by Karani a team reckoning no less than from thirty

* See *ante*, vol. vi. chap. viii.

to forty of our few surviving horses, engaged in dragging up to the front by ploughing and ploughing and ploughing through depths and depths of clay some mighty gun, judged to be wanted for the all-demanding siege.* There were Frenchmen at this cruel time who complacently spoke of their efforts to 'galvanise' into activity the English sloth ;† yet Canrobert himself frankly owned that the whole of the army thus taunted for not doing more heavy siege-work in addition to its other huge tasks, was scarcely greater in numbers than one of his strongest divisions.‡

IV.

When determining once more to take time, the Allies of course could not but know they were giving time to the enemy; but, though making him, and knowingly making him, this dangerous concession, they did not apprehend its full import.

One of the advantages conferred on the enemy by giving him time.

In words hardly varied from those that were used once before, it seems fitting here to repeat that, besides their other artillery, the garrison had not only all the ship's guns—some 1900 in number—not only the ammunition, the iron, the timbers, the cordage, the spars, the tanks, the canvas—all, in short, that a great fleet could need, with vast quantities of stone, already detached from the

Todleben's means of drawing advantage from time;

* Journal Royal Engineers, vol. i. p. 69.

† Bizot to Marshal Vaillant, quoted by Rousset, vol. ii. p. 32.

‡ Ibid., p. 14.

CHAP. I.

neighbouring rocks, but also the machinery, the implements, and the materials which had been in use for the ordinary business of the dockyards, or for quarrying stone on the Chersonese, or carrying on endless works in the port, whether formed by excavations, by embankments, or masonry, including amongst such resources the windlasses, the cranes, the gins, the levers, the engines of all kinds, by which Man enforces his dominion over things of huge bulk and weight, and that all these appliances were not only at the disposal of the defenders, but closely within their reach, coming apt to the hands of labourers who had long been accustomed to wield them.* What, however, still remains to be shown is the strength in numbers of workmen which the besieged and the besiegers respectively could during this winter command for the purposes of defence or attack.

as compared with the means which the Allied Engineers could command.

Whilst the suffering and hampered Allies could employ workmen only by hundreds,(3) the Russians kept engaged on their works an organised body of labourers with a varying strength of no less than from six to ten thousand;† nor does even this statement suffice to show the real disparity; for, comparing them man against man, the Russian labourers were a great deal more hardy, were endowed with more physical strength than those the Allies could employ; and if we take care to remember that the enormously superior command of constructive re-

* Vol. iii. chap. vii.

† Todleben, i. p. 514. The men were organised in two brigades.

sources thus possessed by the garrison was wielded by Colonel de Todleben with prodigious skill and activity, we shall form perhaps some conception of that inferiority in working power which long kept down the Allies. I suppose it might safely be reckoned that in military engineering well conceived and well executed, the enemy—whom ardent besiegers had invited to a trial of strength at this very sort of toil—could achieve much more in one day than his challengers could accomplish in ten.

Todleben's defences.

It was with these vast advantages, wielded by consummate genius, that the formidable colonel of Sappers proved able to work his wonders. Not even neglecting that quiet, that unmolested 'North Side' which a less wary man might have judged to be exempt from all risk, he converted Sebastopol into a mighty fortress prepared for the fight at all points, and defended on the land side alone by great guns already numbering no less than 700, with besides all the lesser artillery held ready at every apt spot to confront storming columns with round-shot, or to greet them when a little more near with his favourite salutes of mitrail.

His more strictly defensive measures.

He closed the gorge of the Little Redan, and of the Malakoff, and afterwards that of the Flagstaff Bastion.(4)

To make sure, if he could, that in the event of their carrying the Flagstaff Bastion, the French should there meet destruction, he, by means of conductors laid down underground, connected the powder-magazine of the Work with a peaceful spot

CHAP. I.

answering his purpose in one of the Sebastopol churches;* and—not forgetting our people—he took like precautions for arresting the triumph of Englishmen who, after storming their way through all the fourfold defences of the Great Redan, might find themselves alive in its precincts.†

As regards the French mining operations, Colonel Todleben met them by countermines in a way we shall presently learn.

By his strictly defensive measures did he make the fortress secure?

By all the works thus accomplished did the great engineer make his fortress secure against any attack of such kind as—with even the strength they then had—the Allies, if they chose, might attempt?

His opinion.

He himself did not so believe. If trusting that everywhere else he as yet might defy the assailants, he still confessed to himself that he had a weak point in his armour which could not by art be made good. He knew indeed that the troops defending his Flagstaff Bastion might be supported by such strong appliances as would enable them, if they chose, to 'die hard'; and to that end amongst many others he bent his designs, never ceasing to provide for the Work, and for all the ground near its gorge such doubled, such trebled, such quadrupled means of resistance that the assailants on the day of the struggle must either recoil from the venture, or dearly buy their conquest with blood; but he believed that with all his resources he could not defend the threatened Bastion against a determined attack; whilst, moreover, he judged that the loss of the Work

* Todleben, p. 503. † Ibid.

would so split the Sebastopol defences as to ensure the fall of the place.* CHAP. I.

It may seem at first sight that this twofold conclusion would warrant an approach towards despondency.

V.

Todleben's measures for averting attack.

But apart from what, narrowly speaking, may be called the 'defence' of 'the Flagstaff Bastion,' there might be measures well fitted to save it by averting, instead of resisting, the threatened attack; and indeed, as we saw, it was to a policy of that sort, adopted on the 5th of November, that the Bastion then owed its immunity from what on the previous day seemed a closely impending assault.

Colonel Todleben could not well ask that another battle of Inkerman should be hazarded for the Flagstaff Bastion, and apparently it may be taken for granted that he did not perseveringly counsel that measure of a 'sortie in strength and by day-'light,' which, according to the judgment of many highly skilled engineers, might have brought the besiegers to ruin; for he almost acknowledges that his own darling plan—his plan of assailing Mount Rodolph with powerful forces and so wresting it from the grasp of the French—was one hardly within the competence of Prince Mentschikoff's army when crippled and in some sort disorganised by its losses on the Inkerman day.

* See his words, quoted *post*, p. 194.

CHAP. I.

His aggressive batteries.

But short of undertaking great sorties, Colonel Todleben did all he could to conduct his defence of Sebastopol in an eagerly aggressive spirit. His lately, his yet more lately, his still more lately raised batteries never ceased to be harrying the besiegers with new, perturbing challenges delivered at break of day by means gathered during the night which forced his overmatched adversaries to be straining their inferior resources in efforts to meet his designs; and, so great was the quickness, the ease with which he thus prepared fire — the fire of heavy, well-covered guns—from changed and changing fronts, that, if hazarding a form of expression rather true than exact, one might say he 'manœuvred' with earth-works as others 'manœuvre' with troops.

His rifle-pits.

Another way in which Todleben maintained his aggressive defence was by sinking and maintaining 'Rifle-pits' at points so far in advance that the fire from marksmen there posted tormentingly galled the besiegers, thus oftentimes making it hard for them, if not indeed almost impossible, to mend their embrasures in the daytime, and subjecting them besides to the bane of having their lines overlooked by observers both near and well sheltered.

So vexatious a kind of encroachment was not to be always maintained without provoking resistance, or rather counter-attack, and the struggles for Rifle-pits occurring in the course of the siege may be said to have only begun with the exploit of young Tryon, who wrested one of these lairs from the hands of the

enemy, and achieved his little conquest so brilliantly as to win and deserve the warm praises of both the Allied commanders, General Canrobert no less than Lord Raglan.

His lodgments.

But the idea of the Rifle-pit soon proved to be only the embryo of another and more formidable conception which was afterwards brought to maturity by Todleben's fertile brain. Instead of sending out a small party of riflemen to choose, on the spur of the moment, a speck of ground in advance, and there dig themselves down into shelter, might he not rather act—though of course on a diminutive scale—as besiegers are wont to do? Might he not cause beforehand a sufficing breadth of ground to be scientifically chosen and duly taped out by skilled engineers, then deliver it, under cover of night, into the hands of strong working-parties, who would instantly and swiftly entrench it? All this, he saw, could be done; and thenceforth the besiegers had cares which resembled in some sort the cares of a people besieged; for too often the morning disclosed a small bit of what, if more lengthy, might almost have been called a 'counter-parallel'; and these 'lodg-'ments'—so Todleben called them—from which the harassed Allies could be either assailed or inspected, soon became beyond measure oppressive. It was on the French—not the English (whose 'approaches' had been less closely pressed)—that the 'lodgments' especially frowned.* The besiegers could resent

* Out of 34 'lodgments' which at one time were counted, two only menaced the English.

CHAP. I.

these aggressions, could assail a lodgment in force, and perhaps drive out of its precincts the enemy's troops; but, such attacks being foreseen, and therefore of course counter-planned by gunners kept on the watch, they used to involve heavy loss.

His aggressive countermines.

When speaking of Todleben's measures for simply resisting attack, I of course included the countermines by which he found means to arrest the subterranean advance of the French; but the genius of this man in war was essentially aggressive; and, far from being content with the strictly defensive results attained by his underground warfare, he besides strove to make it the means of assailing the French, in their siege-works; and thus—taking, as it were, the offensive in regions below—he kept his foes under dread of the mighty volcano he, some day, might bid to break out from the ground lying under their feet. The explosion he effected on the 9th of February did the French no physical harm; but they well might see in it an earnest of further attacks bursting up from the ground underfoot, and thus find themselves kept more or less on the torturing rack of expectancy. Todleben indeed was convinced that by the vigour of his countermining operations he caused the French to mistrust every foot of the ground they must tread when marching against the Flagstaff Bastion, and in that way did much to deter them from ever assaulting the Work.*

* This impression is not strongly supported by French accounts of the siege.

Petty sorties.

There was no resort during the winter to that measure of a powerful sortie which, as some able critics conceived, the Russians ought to have hazarded, but of small sallies, ventured at night, the garrison made frequent use; and, although of course reckoned singly, each enterprise of this petty sort did no more than augment by a little the troubles of the harassed Allies, its repetition, occurring again and again and again, contributed and contributed sensibly towards the weight of that hostile pressure which Todleben was always applying; for the more—though by only small onsets—the guards of the trenches were kept on the alert, the greater of course was the strain—the continuous strain—on their powers.

The strain they put on the guards of the trenches.

Novel contrivance resorted to by the Russians when attacking the French in these sorties.

And, to all the vexations inflicted by these petty sorties, the Russians superadded at one time a newly invented oppression which, although perhaps seeming half comic to people in safety at home who have never known any such trials, proved outraging—beyond measure outraging—to the feelings, the not unjust pride, and the self-respect of the French. It was only against them that the Russians put their odd contrivance in force.

The expedient, I suppose, was less meant for the exigencies of actual fighting than as one for dealing with soldiers surprised, confused, and distracted by a sudden incursion at night-time; but, be that as it may, the Russians at one time did certainly use the lasso, and also the 'gaff,' or some tool resembling a boat-hook, as their means of first upsetting or otherwise arresting an adversary, and then so pulling him

CHAP. I.

Indignation of the French army.

in as to be able to make him their prisoner. The French were indignant at this measure, denouncing it loudly as one that had never before been employed except against the brute creation; and certainly it is intelligible that a soldier with his mind duly schooled to meet the event of being killed, wounded, or made prisoner in the ordinary way, should revolt at the thought of being caught by the lasso like a wild horse in Mexico, or—still worse—gaffed and secured like a floundering salmon or trout.

Generous concession to its feeling by Osten-Sacken.

The feeling of the French ran so high against this abhorred innovation, that General Canrobert under a flag of truce made it the subject of a complaint addressed to the Russian authorities; and in a kindly, magnanimous spirit of concession to the feelings and just pride of a gallant enemy, General Osten-Sacken (then commanding the garrison) at once put an end to the practice.*

The sorties always sooner or later repressed with due vigour.

There was one sortie pushed to the length of enabling those who took part in it to wrest from Canrobert's trenches some minor pieces of ordnance; (5) but I believe it may be said—speaking generally—that, whether made against the French or the English, these onsets—sooner or later—were always repressed with due vigour.

The French guards of the trenches

When making their sorties, the Russians commonly found that, to receive their sudden attacks, the French guards of the trenches were not only in far greater strength than the English engaged in like duties, but also much better prepared, much

* Niel, pp. 128, 129.

more on the alert; and the difference they observed will not surprise those who, whilst knowing the characteristics of English troops generally, have also learnt the conditions under which at this period our men in the trenches were acting. Even when enjoying full health, English soldiery are more apt to be wanting in vigilance than those of most other nations; and at this cruel time, the bodily state of our men was scarce such as would make it possible for them to go through their long hours of duty in the trenches with the watchfulness, the vigour, the care which from men in full health the plain rules of siege-business exact. The excuses for default of vigilance were therefore only too sound, but still, the default was grave. There prevailed indeed so great a laxity that men were not seldom found to be cooking their food in the trenches; and indeed our engineers became sure that their siege-work appliances proved only too often the store from which a half-famished soldier with a piece of raw meat in his sack took what he wanted for fuel.*

compared with the English.

But happily, there was one priceless truth which the enemy always failed to discover. When making these sorties against the English he might well enough see or infer that the guards of our trenches were few as compared to those of the French; but he did not unmask that extremity of numerical weakness which really existed, and perhaps at the time, there was no sort of testimony that well could have made him believe in the

The enemy encountering our guards of the trenches;

without discovering their extreme numerical weakness.

* Journal of the Royal Engineers, Part II., p. 2.

CHAP. I.

statement I am going to present. I base it on the authority of our Royal Engineers. They assure us that, instead of the thousands whom the routine of siege-business would assign for the task, our covering party on duty along the entire right attack (upwards of a mile in extent) was at this period only 350 in number, and that on the night of the 21st of January it mustered only 290 men! (6)

Departure of Prince Napoleon.

Whilst the garrison was plying its foes with all these hostile expedients, the French army saw a step taken which apparently was not one well fitted to cheer a soldiery tried by hardships and stress of war. Prince Napoleon quitted his division, departed from the Crimea, went down to Constantinople, and left those who till then had been his companions in arms to imagine how gloomy their prospects must seem in the eyes of the augurs, when—whatever the cause—this gifted, this keen-witted member of the then reigning family proved no longer minded to stand fast with them in the conflict, and share their doubtful fortunes. Upon receiving intelligence of his cousin's departure, the French Emperor gave strong expression to the anger he felt; but I abstain from recording the measures he took in his rage, because they were not followed up, and there is consequently room for conjecturing that they may have been stayed from a sense of justice, after learning aright the condition of Prince Napoleon's health.* The Prince returned to France.

* I do not myself choose to touch any question respecting his health, though materials for doing so have been placed within reach of the curious by M. Rousset's book, vol. i. pp. 397 *et seq.*

VI.

Still, though under this weight of discouraging troubles, the French were so deeply committed to the enterprise of breaking into Sebastopol by the path of the Flagstaff Bastion that, without the support of reasons adduced from outside their own camp, they could hardly perhaps have endured to make such a change in their policy as would seem to admit that for months their energies had been wrongly applied, and their sacrifices made all in vain.

Natural reluctance of the French to alter their main plan of siege.

Burgoyne all this while had not ceased to insist that the Malakoff front was the one more than all others meet for attack — had not ceased to be counselling plans put forward day after day which, whether directly or not, were aimed with commanding ability at the object kept always in sight;(7) and apparently, it was almost a torture to him to find that, the French being deaf to his counsels, and the English having no men to spare, he could not induce the Allies to press the left flank of the Work from the side of Mount Inkerman—could not even make them determine that their defence of that part of the Mount which they knew they must hold should at least be that kind of defence which, far from being inert, is active, bristling, elastic, and always in its spirit aggressive.*

Burgoyne's insistence upon the expediency of assailing the Malakoff.

In the face of our dread 'Morning States,' and the only too well foreknown scantiness of any English

* Journal Royal Engineers, p. 72.

CHAP. I.

succours approaching, he long clung fast to a hope that the honour of attacking that Work which he held to be the one all-mastering key of the position might accrue to his own fellow-countrymen; and even when forced to see that there could not be laid on our people any heavier share of siege-duty than the one they already were bearing, he still tried to find a way to the object of his heart's desire by proposing that Canrobert's troops should relieve the English infantry from the task of supporting our Left Attack, and that with the force thus set free Lord Raglan should undertake the Malakoff.*

This English proposal, however, was not adopted by Canrobert;† and all people now at length saw that, to insist on the necessity of subduing the Malakoff was substantially the same as declaring that French troops ought to assail it.

The French at first adverse to his counsels.

So long as they were ardently hopeful of bringing the strife to an issue on their own chosen ground, the French seemed to hearken unfavourably, and not always without signs of impatience, to Burgoyne's able counsels, all tending to draw their energies eastward, and engage them in some way or other against the Malakoff front;(8) but at last, when under the stress of those gathering perils and

* Journal Royal Engineers, pp. 63, 139. M. Rousset therefore errs when making it appear, as he does (vol. ii. p. 31), that, instead of assailing it themselves, our own people cast off on the French the great task of assailing the Malakoff. He errs also when saying (ibid.) that the French consented to '*substitute* themselves for the English in 'besieging the Malakoff.' The English had never besieged it. When they ruined it on the 17th of October 1854, they did this by firing across the Dockyard Ravine.

† Ibid., p. 63.

troubles to which we saw them laid open by their measures against the Town front, they became more ready to listen; and Burgoyne, on the other hand, seemed going half-way to meet them; because under one of its aspects, he treated the new move as one that was auxiliary to their old plan of siege against the Sebastopol town. Assuming that the French, as before, would assail the Flagstaff Bastion, and that—still as before—our people would give them the best support that they could by operating against the Great Redan and the Barrack Battery, he showed that in the existing state of the defences—very different from what they had been on the 17th of October—that support would almost surely be neutralised or made ineffective, unless the fire from the Malakoff could first be subdued. He urged, therefore, that the fire of the Malakoff should be subdued accordingly;* and it followed that the task of subduing it must rest with the French, because they, and they only (since refusing to take on themselves the duties of our Left Attack), could dispose of any bodies of troops great enough for the object thus sought.

But afterwards more willingly listening to them.

These ideas found favour with Bizot, the commander of the French Engineers;† and prevailed in a Conference of Three (attended by Bizot, Burgoyne, and General Airey), which accordingly determined (though subject of course to the approval of the

Acceptance of Burgoyne's opinion in a Conference of Three.

* Journal Royal Engineers, Part I., p. 85.

† From the papers before me I gather that his conversion must have taken place so early as the 26th of December.

CHAP. I.

Commanders-in-Chief) that, before it would be possible to assail the Redan and the Barrack Battery with any prospect of success, it was necessary to attack the left of the enemy's works, and to get the better of the defences of the Malakoff.*

Step tending in an opposite direction immediately taken by Canrobert.

The conversion of the French at that time was, however, so far from complete that, instead of the ratification expected from their Commander-in-Chief, there came from him to Lord Raglan a paper so framed that, far from importing agreement, it bristled with language well fitted to provoke dispute and antagonism.

His official letter to Lord Raglan.

Accompanied by a short private note which merely announced the sending of the other epistle, this paper was in form a despatch—an official letter—from Canrobert detailing the several schemes that had been put forward, reflecting upon the different plans that had been suggested by Sir John Burgoyne, setting forth the various duties which the French army had to perform, and calling upon Lord Raglan to state specifically what he could undertake to do in a given time.†

Lord Raglan's way of dealing with it.

Lord Raglan had 'always felt that as the French 'army increased in numbers his personal position 'would become more difficult;' and he now at once saw that, if met in the spirit which seems to have dictated its composition, or even if fully answered at all by a despatch from himself, this missive might prove, with its set interrogatories, to be the begin-

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State—Secret—January 2, 1855.

† General Canrobert to Lord Raglan, 30th December 1854.

ning of an antagonistic correspondence imperilling that thorough accord between the French and the English which, he said, it had been the object of his 'almost every thought to maintain.' * CHAP. I.

Lord Raglan therefore determined to address to the French headquarters some 'indirect communications,' which he hoped might serve as a substitute for any full, written answer proceeding straight from himself, and might even perhaps enable him to ward off altogether that interchange of controversial epistles which (for reasons already made plain) he judged to be a 'great evil.' †

Accordingly, after handing to Sir John Burgoyne the French commander's despatch, in order that Sir John might prepare replies to that part of the missive which an officer of engineers might fairly consider professional, he conversed very fully with General Rose,‡ and then took his ulterior step. Believing it politic that—at least for the moment—he himself should stand aloof personally from the approaching discussion, he requested one of his Staff officers to wait upon General Canrobert.

Accordingly, on the 1st of January the Staff officer charged with this mission rode off to the French headquarters, where Canrobert received him with kindness in presence of the 'État Major,' as well as of General Rose, and he then adduced grounds in support of the plan approved at the

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State—Secret—January 2, 1855.

† Ibid.

‡ The English commissioner at the French headquarters.

CHAP. I.

recent Conference of Three by Bizot as well as Burgoyne.

That the Staff officer charged with this task pressed his way to the object in view with consummate ability will be almost taken for granted by those who happen to know how richly he was gifted with that kind of natural eloquence which rapidly, vividly pictures a given condition of things, and at once unleashes such motives upon the minds of his hearers as shall drive them towards action in the sense desired by the speaker; but it is hardly credible that the drama of real life should—like the more clear, the more compact drama of poets—display such a sequence as that of persuasive speech causing instantly, by its own force alone, a change of design momentously affecting great nations; and accordingly, one may treat it as probable that before this last meeting took place, General Canrobert must already have felt some regret for the step he had taken when sending his recent despatch — must already have much reconsidered his objections to that joint advice which his own engineer General Bizot had concurred with Burgoyne in submitting.

The French ultimately reverting to the decision of the 'Three';

Be that as it may, he at once, and in presence of the officers of the French headquarters staff and of General Rose, admitted the accuracy of what Lord Raglan's envoy had urged, and then intimated that he would, after all, follow the decision of the last Conference.* He required that, to cover his troops whilst effecting a lodgment on the Mamelon in front

* Ibid.

CHAP. I.

of the Malakoff, the English should furnish two flanking batteries—one of eight, one of fifteen great guns; but being provided with the heavy pieces of ordnance as well as the ammunition required, and understanding that their known want of "hands" would be made good by French working-parties, our people were happily able to accept the condition imposed.(9)

and on certain conditions agreeing to assail the Malakoff front.

Thus at last General Canrobert acceded to the gist of the counsel long tendered and pressed by Burgoyne; but of even higher moment, and of more happy augury than the change he so made, was his consequent, though tacit withdrawal of the perilous despatch he had sent hardly two days before to Lord Raglan's headquarters. What appeared on the Saturday evening to be only too probably the opening of an antagonistic correspondence between the French and the English commanders was happily turned into nothingness on the following Monday; and the almost measureless value of the service Lord Raglan thus rendered will be recognised by any one competent to imagine the train of calamities that might well have been expected to follow any lengthened dissension, or even approach to dissension, between the French and the English headquarters. Lord Raglan accomplished his object by boldly taking a course which struck out of the beaten path, and by making that gentle, yet powerful use of sagacity which, until some one called it 'tact,' people hardly knew how to designate. Still, fortune too, under one aspect, may be said to have aided Lord Raglan in this anxious crisis

The gravity of the dangers thus averted.

CHAP. I.

of his relations with the French; for it is rarely the lot of a general not also a sovereign to have at his side so gifted, so persuasive an envoy as the one he charged with that mission to General Canrobert's quarters.

The envoy sent by Lord Raglan to the French head-quarters.

But who was the envoy thus trusted for a work truly vital—the envoy thus happily able to return from his mission with tidings of absolute concord instead of the threatened dissension?

He was one whom our people at home were visiting with their bitterest wrath—wrath not caused, I gladly believe, by any deep malice, but rather by sheer mistake. It sometimes happens in battle that—confused by mist, smoke, and tumult—a regiment stands busily firing upon a friendly body of troops, because taking it for an enemy's column; and the regiment, if English, and therefore tenacious of purpose, is not very easily checked; for the men—having warmed to their baneful work—look up angrily and deafly at the excited young aide-de-camp who has galloped up shouting, protesting with a vehemence they quite disapprove, and turn savagely on the bugler who, under some orders from an unknown officer on horseback, has begun to sound the 'Cease firing'!

It was by a mistake no less innocent, yet also, one must own, no less obstinate, that whilst this devoted Staff officer—the right-hand man of Lord Raglan—was toiling day and night at headquarters in the business of the winter campaign, our misjudging people in England were making him a mark for

attacks, conducted with a power, strength of will, and set purpose sufficing to carry along with them 'the Government' of what used to pass for a sober monarchical State. So high, so seemingly absolute was the warrant his assailants obtained for the cry they set raging against him, that two successive Administrations at home persistently, angrily laboured to deprive our headquarters of his services, and were only prevented from thus doing grievous harm to their country, because met and baffled by Lord Raglan's unshaken firmness, and fairly conquered at last by the sure yet slow progress of truth.* The envoy was General Airey.

General Canrobert on the 1st of January had insisted with energy that the arrangements then made should be 'instantly' carried into effect; but his words, as it happened, were followed by immensely protracted delay. The stress of hard winter, the sufferings of the troops, the throes of that vital, that painful, that dangerous question between General Canrobert and Lord Raglan, which we saw lasting on till the latter part of the month,(10) the harassing communications from the French Emperor, now gravely alarmed—alarmed, it was said, for his 'dynasty'—the perturbing foreshadow of a general coming out to the Crimea from Paris with full power, as was thought, to 'advise,' to conduct an inquisition in camp, nay even indeed to 'reorganise' the staff of Canrobert's army, the arrival on the 27th of January of General Niel, the engineer officer sup-

Long delay.

* See vol. vi. chap. ix.

CHAP. I.

posed to be armed with all this transcendent authority, the painful changes that followed, and then afterwards, under new auspices, the reopening of a once closed discussion about choice of plans for the siege —these circumstances, and perhaps many more, contributed to prevent the besiegers from giving any effect to the agreement of the 1st of January until more than four weeks had elapsed; and meanwhile—as though having learnt something of Anglo-French counsels—the enemy had been visibly devoting increased attention and care to his Malakoff front.

This Russian change on the one hand, and on the other, the presence of General Niel with authority to inquire and 'advise,' made it seem very natural that —without being therefore suspected of any desire to retreat from their engagements of the 1st of January —the French should bring fresh thought to bear on the management of their promised enterprise against the Malakoff Tower.

1st and 2d February. Modified plan put forward by the French,

After lengthened discussions with Burgoyne, our allies framed a plan from which indeed it appeared that they then were more strongly inclined to proceed against the Mamelon by 'approaches' than by summary modes of attack; but still the plan seemed to aim at a faithful, if not swift performance of the engagement made on the 1st of January, and accordingly Lord Raglan approved it.* After having been also approved by a council of French generals, held on the 1st of February, the particulars of the newly

and approved by Lord Raglan;

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State—Secret—6th February 1855.

wrought plan were recorded on the following day in words described as 'Instructions.'(11)

but now known to have masked another design.

We now know that, though outwardly wearing an honest appearance, this 'plan' masked a settled design on the part of Niel and his Emperor to take a course irreconcilable with the engagements of the 1st of January.*

VII.

Import of the change of plan as first understood by the French.

When determining, on the ground we have shown, to assail the Malakoff front, our allies, we know, looked on the measure as auxiliary to their former operations; and even when seeing deeper into the consequences of the change, they still did not at all mean to loosen that pressure by siege-work and heavy batteries which they had long been applying to the defences of the Sebastopol town, nor indeed did they all at once tell themselves that they would abandon the idea of storming the Flagstaff Bastion. On the contrary, both the resolutions of the council of the 1st of February, and the paper of Instructions which issued from the French headquarters on the following day, were based upon a supposition that assaults of the Flagstaff Bastion, if not indeed also of the 'Central,' were soon to be hazarded.

But, however regarded at first, this now ordained war against the Malakoff was, after all, war against the masterful key of the position, with therefore a tendency—an ever-increasing tendency—to draw to

* See *post*, cap. v.

CHAP. I.

itself more and more of the energies that could be roused on each side by a conflict charged with great issues; and besides, it so happened that on the very morrow of the day when they issued that paper of Instructions our allies encountered a blow which destroyed some long-cherished hopes, and materially weakened their prospect of ever breaking through the Town front.

VIII.

The French mining operations.

It was on the 20th of November that the French had begun to push forward their great mining enterprise, and they had thenceforth conducted it with unwearied energy, their first design being to surprise the enemy by effecting an explosion under his Flagstaff Bastion. Unenlightened, it seems, by either spies or deserters, or by even those inferences which might fairly have been drawn from known facts, they worked their way somewhat unguardedly, moving earth-trucks backwards and forwards without duly muffling their sounds, and besides often talking aloud, as though—because twenty feet deep in the bowels of the earth—they needs must be out of the earshot of any listening enemy.

Yet the foe whom they had challenged by entering on this underground warfare was perhaps one more thoroughly practised, more highly skilled in its mysteries, more eager to use its resources than any other mortal then living; [12] and before they had burrowed their way to the ground required for their

purpose, an enemy—like themselves subterranean, but—silent, unheard, unsuspected, was awaiting them in his listening galleries.

Todleben's skill and power in the science of mining.

The great engineer whose sagacity they were going to encounter scarce awaited the reports of deserters; for, when he saw that the French (after having had time for the venture) did not visibly push their approaches beyond the third parallel, he inferred that—almost as of course—they would try to work their way underground, and therefore at a huge cost of labour, he resolved to meet any such enterprise by a vast spreading system of countermines.(13)

His countermines.

The work he thus set on foot was continued with unflagging energy, though during several weeks it did no more than aim darkly at an enemy—unseen and unheard—who was only to be reconnoitred by inferences, and as yet earned no certain reward.

Progress of the mining and countermining operations.

But at length, on the 30th of January, the expected reward of long toil was attained and joyfully welcomed; for then Colonel Todleben learnt that at the extremity of one of his listening galleries the French could be heard, and he even proved able to assure himself that—burrowing through the same stratum (a stratum of yellow clay) in which he had established his countermines—they were piercing ground on a level with that to which he pressed his keen ear when listening for signs of their presence.

In the dark, creeping science of underground war, the moment of first hearing the enemy is one of enthralling interest, whilst also it is one of exultation, if there be reason to think that the hearing has

CHAP. I.

not been reciprocal; for in the strife between miner and counterminer, he who is the first to hear his antagonist has already obtained the ascendant. On the 30th, those sounds of hostile mining that the Russian counterminer detected were only slight and faint; but the very next day, sounds reached his listening ear with so great a distinctness as to prove that the underground Frenchmen must be then very near; and moreover, it could be soundly inferred that they were suspecting no countermine, because they worked noisily, and could even be heard freely talking. By means of a powerful explosion, Colonel Todleben could have then broken through what remained of the clay still dividing him from the French; but a charge strong enough for that purpose would have also pressed up with such force as to disturb the surface of the ground above, and might thus afford cover to an enemy advancing against the Flagstaff Bastion. Therefore Todleben, with a great self-restraint, determined that, before he assailed them, he would let the French burrow still closer, and thus so reduce the thickness of the interposed clay as to give him the means of overwhelming them by an explosion of only moderate strength.

At length, on the 3d of February—the fourth day after the one when the miner's approach was first heard—Colonel Todleben unleashed a camouflet ([14]) which left undisturbed the whole surface of the ground overhead, but tore its way into the gallery where the French had been heard, killing two of their men as it passed, and visibly finding its issue

in the open air through ground behind their third parallel, thus showing him where lay the entrance to their system of mines.

The French of course then understood that their project of surprising the enemy by a mine to be sprung from ground under his Flagstaff Bastion had been discovered and baffled; but it occurred to their chief engineer that they might still draw advantage from the system of underground approaches on which they had bestowed so much labour, because it would enable their miners to open up by explosion a line of craters half-way between their foremost trench and the counterscarp of the opposite bastion, and he hoped that the ground, when so broken, and therefore affording some cover, might be made the beginning of a fourth parallel. He therefore by means of explosion threw up, to begin with, one crater of moderate size;* but it was seized, was crowned, was definitively held by the Russians;† and, the second design of the French being thus—like the first one—defeated, it results that, so far, Colonel Todleben obtained and kept his ascendant at the seat of this underground war.

Their result.

IX.

This result of their mining operations against the Flagstaff Bastion tended strongly of course to with-

The peremptory part of the

* Evening of the 7th of February.—Niel, p. 146; Todleben, p. 619 *et seq.*

† Niel and Todleben, *ubi ante.*

CHAP. I.

besieger's design now shifting from the Flagstaff Bastion to the Malakoff.

draw our baffled allies from any still extant idea of making the Work their real pathway for leading them into Sebastopol; and thenceforth, if not yet resolved, they were far on the road towards resolving that their plans against the main town need no longer include a set purpose to carry its defences by storm; so that what perhaps one may call the peremptory part of their siege, that is, the 'Attack' they would push to the issue of a determined assault, was the one now about to be opened against the Malakoff Tower, or rather that girdle of works which by this time had closed round its base.

In bringing themselves to this choice the French were much governed by thinking of what might await them after once breaking through the defences. They judged that their troops in such case would operate much more massively, and therefore more advantageously, in the spaces afforded by the Karabel Faubourg than in the ravines and the streets which intersected the town.*

X.

Dispositions consequent upon Canrobert's resolve to operate against the Malakoff.

General Canrobert entrusted the operations he was going to undertake against the Malakoff to his second corps—the 'Corps of Observation' then still posted, as before, under Bosquet along the Sapounè Heights. With forces thence drawn he relieved our troops theretofore holding the lofty Victoria Ridge, and completed the Work at its summit. This

* Niel, p. 139.

Work was a simple redoubt, but by many—including Lord Raglan—had been called the Victoria Fort.

The works of defence on Mount Inkerman were by this time complete; and those of them which from the first had remained in charge of the English our people continued to hold; but the bulk of our troops on the Chersonese lay henceforth compactly disposed between the 2d French Corps on their right, and the 1st French Corps on their left.

The Allies commencing works destined to aid a meditated attack on the Mamelon.

Acting smoothly in concert, and each, in so far as was possible, making good the other's deficiencies, the French and the English armies began to fulfil the condition laid down on the 1st of January, and accordingly to construct the two batteries which (by means of flanking fires thrown from different and far-parted ridges) were destined to aid our allies in their meditated attack on the Malakoff, or rather as their more immediate object on the intervening Mamelon.(15)

The greater of these was the one—here called the Artilleur Battery*—which (after first opening approaches on ground near the site they designed for it†) the French began to construct on a western spur of Mount Inkerman; the other one—the King Battery—found a place in the second parallel of Gordon's Attack, and fronted towards the north.‡ It was

* An aggregate appellation comprising what were more strictly called the 'No. 1,' and the 'No. 2.' The battery, destined from the first for fifteen heavy guns, received afterwards more, and was armed by our people. It was constructed by the French Artillery.

† Niel, pp. 141, 150.

‡ This battery—strictly called 'No. 9'—was armed by our people

CHAP. I.

constructed in the main by French soldiery; and the sight of those troops briskly, steadily, ably performing their allotted task, caused our people to admire, caused them even indeed to record the efficient, the orderly way in which their allies did the work.(16)

XI.

Various movements and changes:

In the course of the long winter period which this chapter spans, there occurred, besides all I have told, and much more that I leave unrecorded, the following movements and changes:—

On the part of the Russians;

When towards the close of November a French officer, M. Saint Laurent (a chief of battalion), taking with him a few engineers, supported by a number of Zouaves, performed the gallant exploit of cutting the 'East Sapper's Road,' Prince Mentschikoff no longer clung to his power of moving guns and wheeled carriages by that line of route, but on the contrary, stopped short its connection with the opposite bank of the Tchernaya by destroying the Inkerman Bridge;(17) so that thenceforth he trusted exclusively to his peaceful, undisturbed communications still effected, as usual, by moving across the roadstead to or from what was called the 'North 'Side.' The arrangements for that last course of

with eight guns. In calling the parallel which received it the 2d, 'Parallel,' I follow the old nomenclature, though, in consequence of new siege-works taking ground in its rear, the authorities afterwards *promoted* it to the rank of a *3d* Parallel.

transit were carefully systematised, and brought to a high state of efficacy.*

In the early part of December, the Russians dismantled the little redoubts on the line of the Woronzoff Road, withdrew their camps from the plain of Balaclava, and thenceforth kept only outposts on the left bank of the Tchernaya.†

After his defeat at Inkerman, General Dannenberg was removed from the command of the 4th Army Corps, and replaced by General Osten-Sacken.

On the part of the French;

More than once in the course of this period, French troops reconnoitred a broad sweep of territory, which comprised the whole plain of Balaclava, with also a line of country extending beyond towards the east; and they not only pushed to completeness their search for the knowledge desired, but effected their tasks with a brilliant smartness and skill which drew warm praise from Lord Raglan.

their reconnaissances.

It was to one of these admirably conducted reconnaissances that the Allies owed their knowledge of the enemy's withdrawal from the plain of Balaclava.

The treatment experienced by Forey.

Amongst those 'reorganising' directions which General Niel had brought out, there was one which removed General Forey from the command of the 1st Corps d'Armée, and entrusted it to General Pélissier—an officer destined to reach, though not until some months afterwards, a yet more exalted command.

* Todleben, p. 589.

† Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, December 8, 1854, No. 120.

CHAP. I.

General Forey on the 2d of December 1851 had done an act of great moment, and he possibly thought himself one who, whatever might be the mute feeling of his country at large, did at least deserve well of the 'Empire.' *

So far as concerns his part in the siege of Sebastopol, I am not myself cognisant of any fault or shortcoming with which he could rightly be charged; for the care, the severity with which he strove to maintain the warlike spirit of the French army, and to expose evasions of duty on the part of its officers was plainly a merit, and one of very high value. Still, by merit of that unpleasing kind he of course stirred up hatred; and it seems probable that the enemies he thus raised up against himself may have been the men who found means to compass his fall. Be that as it may, he was visited by treatment which, in the absence of any more knowledge than I on this subject possess, must seem unaccountably harsh. Deposed from the command of his Corps d'Armée, he was relegated to the command of a single division forming part of Canrobert's forces, and being also refused permission to retire from active service, he was thus, as it were, kept picketed under the eyes of that army which had seen him put down from the higher to the lower place. It was only after some lapse of time that the treatment of the General was softened by appointing him to the governorship of Oran.

* He captured Parliament 'sitting,' and marched it off to prison. See *ante*, vol. i. chap. xiv. p. (in 5th edition) 248 *et seq.*

CHAP. I.

The French breast-plates.

The French Emperor in this month of February gave actual, physical effect to what modern soldiers regard as a fanciful notion. The better to enable his soldiers before Sebastopol to carry defences by storm, he sent out to them 4000 breastplates.* Of these, 3000 were divided equally between the 1st and 2d Corps d'Armée, but were never used; and —alive to what they call 'a Ridicule'—the French, as they expressed it, advised themselves to 'main-'tain on this delicate subject a prudent silence.' †

On the part of the English.

Field-telegraph.

Railway.

Under the directions of Lieutenant Stopford of the Royal Engineers, our people in the beginning of December constructed an electric field-telegraph; ‡ and it was towards the close of the same month that a civil engineer (Mr Campbell) began his operations for making the railway between Balaclava and camp of which we before had to speak when dealing with the means of supply. §

Command of fleet.

In December the command of our fleet passed from Admiral Dundas to Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons.

XII.

Result of the conflict from the 6th of November 1854 to the middle of February 1855.

The defenders of Sebastopol entered upon this period of the conflict on the morrow of Inkerman and therefore whilst under the shadow of not simply,

* Vaillant, Minister of War, to Canrobert, Feb. 3, 1855. Quoted by Rousset, vol. ii. p. 23.

† Ibid., p. 24.

‡ Journal of Royal Engineers, p. 66.

§ See *ante*, vol. vi. p. 385.

CHAP. I. a bloody defeat sustained by the 'relieving army,' but a defeat with all its horrors brought closely home to the garrison by the propinquity of the battle-field, by the spectacle of disordered troops coming back beaten into the streets, by the piteous sight and sound of the wounded whether led or supported or carried in heaps by endless trains of waggons, and soon after by seeing and hearing how what a few hours before had been strong, proud battalions, were some of them only poor remnants—remnants stricken with even more weakness than the scantness of their numbers imported, because in a measure disorganised by the huge loss of officers; yet, so high was the spirit of the people, and so great the firmness, the skill, the resource of the great engineer then directing their energies that, far from yielding to depression, or suffering the defence to grow weak, they carried it on with a vigour which almost undid the curse—the potent curse—of defeat, and so bore themselves that, after a while, they stood, as some thought, in less jeopardy than the baffled victors of Inkerman.

This vigour did not drive the Allies to so desperate a course as that of raising the siege, and trying to regain their ships; but at least it impelled them so strongly to escape from an ugly predicament that they resigned themselves to a change implying confession of error. By accepting Sir John Burgoyne's counsels, they seemed in effect to acknowledge that what they had done already had been, much of it, done in vain, and that what they would henceforth

treat as the cardinal act of their enterprise was only now to begin.

In the course of this period therefore, as must now have been seen, the great colonel of Sappers wrought wonders; for, as before under yet more appalling conditions he (with Korniloff then at his side) had found means to ward off from Russia what seemed the natural consequence of her defeat on the Alma, so now he in large measure neutralised the effect of her terrible overthrow sustained on the 5th of November, and even turned the scale against victory by a masterful exertion of power which made the invaders despair — not indeed of their siege altogether, but—of their siege as hitherto planned.

XIII.

Questions raised by scientific critics.

Since vast efforts during this period had on both sides been made without being brought to the test of a great and determined attack by either the Allies or the Russians, there of course was left open a field for any critic inclined to speak in the potential mood, saying—not what happened in fact, but—what in his judgment might well have been expected to happen, if the measure he approved had been tried.

Some not only judged, as we have seen, that a determined assault of the Flagstaff Bastion must needs have carried the Work, but also declared it certain that the fall of the Bastion must have ren-

CHAP. I. dered altogether impossible a continued defence of Sebastopol; whilst others maintained that the Russians by a powerful sortie might have brought the besiegers to ruin. The two creeds at first glance might seem to be antagonistic, because he who clung to the one happened often, if not almost always, to run down the other, yet they did not in reality clash; for possibly either expedient, if ventured with boldness and skill, might have served to achieve its full purpose; so that victory under this aspect would be said to have awaited the bidding of him who might be the assailant—of him who, whether Russian or French, should prove himself the first of the two to strike a determined blow.

If this last conclusion were sound, we might say of the besieger and the besieged that during several months, each lay at the mercy of each.

CHAPTER II.

EUPATORIA.

I.

CHAP. II.

THAT seaport town Eupatoria which surrendered to our Admiral in the earliest hour of the invasion had of late been a subject of conflict.

From the day when Mr Hamilton, the humorous purser of the Britannia, first set his foot in the place, and there jovially opened a market, the owners of flocks and herds pasturing in the adjacent districts had been glad to sell their cattle to purchasers who approached them with money in hand; and the Allies thus established close, friendly relations with not only the people of the town but also their country neighbours.* Those countrymen, however, soon found that they were dangerously circumstanced; for—unable to plead compulsion, like their happier brethren in the surrendered town—they lay open of course to the charge of wilfully aiding an enemy. Therefore, when they descried Russian cavalry alarmingly near to their homesteads, these yeomen hastened to

Condition of things in Eupatoria and its neighbourhood.

* *Ante*, vol. ii. cap. x.

CHAP. II.

fly from the imagined wrath of their Czar, took shelter within the town, and pastured their flocks in its neighbourhood.

Russian cavalry after a while drew a cordon about Eupatoria on its land side, and took care to maintain it so closely that the flocks in their neighbouring pastures were no longer safe against capture. Some ten thousand head of cattle which would otherwise have furnished good meat to our suffering troops on the Chersonese, were seized instead by the enemy, and driven off into his camp.*

II.

Assembly of the force under Baron Wrangel; its task.

Danger threatening the enemy's communications.

At the close of the out-pasturing season, the cavalry, busied till then in maintaining this landward blockade, became the nucleus of a much larger force of all arms placed under General Baron Wrangel. The force stood charged with the task of securing Prince Mentschikoff's line of communication from those attacks on its flank which, he thought, might be made by an army brought over the sea, and collected in the town of Eupatoria. Prince Mentschikoff's apprehensions were sound; for the Czar's retreat from the country of the Danube had set free the victorious soldiery of Omar Pasha; and by using the mighty prerogative which belongs to command of the sea, the Allies could present a new army

* Todleben, vol. i. p. 649. The number carried off is there stated at 9872.

on the flank of those all-precious roads which carried the life-blood of Russia to nourish her strength in Sebastopol.

Arrival of some Turkish battalions, and soon of Omar Pasha in person, at Eupatoria.

The English indeed had begun to seize this plain opportunity, and already their Admiral (Lyons) had moved some of Omar's battalions across the Black Sea to their destined post in Eupatoria, when Prince Mentschikoff, made aware of their landing, and assured that more battalions would follow, became absolutely obliged to determine a question of no small moment.—Should he patiently stand acquiescent whilst our seamen were planting an army on the flank of his artery-roads, or try, whilst yet there was time, to reconquer the seaport and town in which this new danger was gathering?

Question calling for Mentschikoff's decision;

his measures.

With an eye to his eventual choice of that latter alternative, he at once, though not yet quite resolved, brought up Baron Wrangel's troops to a strength great enough for the purpose—that is, for the twofold purpose of continuing to guard the communications, and also attacking Eupatoria.

After causing the ground to be examined, Baron Wrangel confronted the notion of hazarding the projected attack with a judgment decisively adverse; but Prince Mentschikoff bluffly commanded him to execute another reconnaissance, saying also that he was to do this in person; and besides, put General Khrouleff—an officer about to be prominent in recommending the measure—at the head of the Baron's artillery.

Then—excited by the visible passing of great

CHAP. II.

English steamers in the direction of Eupatoria, and not waiting for the fruits of the newly directed reconnaissance—Prince Mentschikoff on the 8th of February directed Baron Wrangel to assault the place—to assault it without delay.*

Baron Wrangel, however, by this time had completed his further reconnaissance; and—speaking now even more confidently than ever before—he stated it to be his opinion that an attack on Eupatoria would be hazardous in the extreme. He declared that upon receiving from his chief a formal order in writing to attack the place he would do his best to attain the end proposed, and said he was proceeding accordingly—despite the state of the ground, and despite want of water and firewood—to effect the necessary concentration of troops; but he declined to 'accept responsibility' for the consequences of an assault.†

For a moment, Prince Mentschikoff yielded to the resistance thus offered, and sent a reply in that sense; but two hours afterwards, he did the very opposite. Upon learning that General Khrouleff had carefully explored the ground, and considered it possible to take Eupatoria without incurring great losses, he not only made up his mind to have the enterprise tried, but to have it conducted by him who—directly in the face of the judgment pronounced by his immediate chief (Baron Wrangel)—had formed a counter-opinion, and imparted it to the Commander-in-Chief.

Mentschikoff's resolve to have Eupatoria attacked;

* Todleben, p. 679. † Ibid., p. 681.

EUPATORIA.

The Russians repulsed by the Turks, 17th February 1855.

To General Khrouleff accordingly, by Mentschikoff's orders, Baron Wrangel at once handed over that chosen part of his forces which was to make and support the attack.

by forces withdrawn from Baron Wrangel;

A man of Teuton blood set aside for giving what he thought prudent counsels, and a Sclave leaping up into power with the force of his more sanguine nature—such a spectacle could not but charm any Russians indulging that jealousy with which the bricks of the fable are said to have looked on the builder. Yet before giving vent to the joy of seeing a vehement Sclave vault over the head of a Teuton, those Russians perhaps should have waited to see the result—should have waited till a quarter past ten on the morning of the 17th of February.

and placed under General Khrouleff.

III.

The defences and resources of Eupatoria.

Before the 17th of February, Eupatoria under the auspices of the French Major Osmont (the governor of the place) had been fortified on the land side by an arc-shaped belt of defence with a crown-work in front of its centre. The belt was formed mainly of earthen ramparts (with a fosse sunk along the outside), but consisted in part of only piled stones, or the ruins of demolished houses provided with banquettes for infantry.

All these works, it is true, were still but half finished, yet already they furnished the means of offering fair resistance to troops which might seek to carry the place by merely summary means.

CHAP. II.

Owing only, it seems, to the thaw, and not to laboured design, the fosse had some water within it, and was destined to pass with the Russians for what science calls a 'Wet Ditch.' The Works had been armed with 34 heavy guns, and provided with five rocket-stands. Omar Pasha in person had landed; and the part of his army already in Eupatoria numbered 23,000 men.* There was also in the place a detachment of nearly 300 soldiers left in garrison there by the French, with besides, the saved crew of their stranded ship Henri IV. The place was not only secure towards the sea, but moreover so circumstanced that ships could take part in the land-side defence. Besides the stranded ship (which could still use some of her batteries) another French steamer—the Véloce—was lying on the east of the bay; as was also the Turkish ship Shaffaer, with the Admiral Ahmed Pasha on board her; and near its western extremity there lay an English detachment under Captain Hastings, comprising the Curaçao, the Furious, the Valorous, and the gunboat Viper.

The place held within it a native population which may be computed at about 26,000, of whom some 5500 were in easy circumstances, and the rest in a state of indigence.†

* Colonel Simmons (Major-General on the staff of Omar Pasha) to Lord Raglan, Feb. 22, 1855.

† The Report of the Commission which sat on this subject gives exact numbers and is before me, but it relates to the 16th of March.

At short distances outside the town, there were not only quarries, but also several burial-grounds, and the desire of the engineers to clear the ground under their guns from all such obstructions was controlled by respect for the dead.

The forces under General Khrouleff now charged to attack Eupatoria.

Without reckoning—although it lay near—any part of the much-reduced force still left under Wrangel's command, the enemy's troops set apart for this enterprise against Eupatoria comprised horse, foot, and artillery, with a strength of about 20,000, and 108 guns, of which 24 might be said to have siege-train calibres.* All this force, as already we know, was commanded by General Khrouleff.

Their preparations.

To shelter their guns and their gunners when opening fire on the morrow, the Russians passed the night of the 16th in throwing up a line of epaulments at a distance of from 600 to 800 yards from the place; and in front of each interval they sank rifle-pits for five sharpshooters.

Nor was this line of 76 guns the only one destined to press upon Omar's defences; for at an early hour, General Khrouleff brought up two light

* Without the artillerymen, Todleben (p. 684) puts the strength at 18,883. The 24 heavy guns were what the Russians call 'guns of 'position,' and included some which—though heavier—our people called 32-pounders.

CHAP. II.

batteries from his reserves to positions north-east of the town, whence their fire might take it in flank.

Their plan in its earlier stages.

The Russians meant first to deliver a strong, yet brief cannonade, and then to advance towards the place disposed in a line of three columns of infantry supported by squadrons of horse.* For the purposes of the intended assault, Khrouleff's forces brought with them a quantity of fascines, or, as our people called them, small fagots, with also ladders, and planks.

IV.

The engagement of the 17th of February.

From the line of epaulments at daybreak on the 17th of February, the Russians opened their fire against the defences of Eupatoria with 76 pieces of cannon; but they afterwards pushed forward their line of artillery to ground so far in advance as to be within some four or five hundred yards of the defences. On the whole, aided always by riflemen, this strong cannonade proved effective. It completely disabled one Turkish battery, inflicting upon it a loss of 19 men. It weakened more or less other batteries. It killed Selim Pasha and struck down another general. It brought about several explosions, and the town at last slackening fire seemed to own itself ripe for assault.

Then accordingly General Khrouleff began to move forward his columns. Against the western

* I say nothing of the ulterior measures designed, because they were not executed.

part of the town he made only a feint—a feint very soon checked and stopped by the presence of the English ships, and the fire that poured from the ramparts.

It was on the opposite—the eastern—flank that the General had by this time resolved to deliver his real attack; and at length by a circuitous march he brought down his left-hand column to ground on the shore of Lake Sassic some 900 yards from the town.

Omar Pasha perceiving all this, took care to strengthen his right with additional troops, and besides, asked Captain Hastings to send across his gunboat, the Viper, to the eastern side of the bay. The Viper moved thither accordingly; and—along with the Véloce and the Shaffaer—was soon taking part in the combat.

Whenever occasion allowed, these vessels of course brought their fire to bear on the enemy's troops; but great would be the error of fancying that the value of this naval contribution to the defence of Eupatoria can be measured by counting the Russians struck down by fire from the ships. The seamen did more than kill and wound. Because forcing the enemy to know or imagine what they could and would do against him, if seen by their gunners, they painfully cramped his movements; and besides, kept him under that sense of being assailed by unassailable adversaries which must and will always be hateful to even the most valiant men.

In execution of his real attack General Khrouleff

CHAP. II.

by this time was operating against the east and north-east of the town with a chosen part of his forces no less than some 6000 strong; but substantially, all his movements of troops brought about only one little effort of a combative sort—the effort we shall now see him make with a couple of light field-batteries, and two of his Azoff battalions.

Close outside of the town on its north-eastern side, there lay the burial-ground of the Russians, and beyond it one of much greater size set apart for the Jewish community. Being surrounded by walls, and containing many tombstones and monuments, both the burial-grounds offered cover to any forces advancing against that part of the 'curtain' which connected the 'No. 2' with the 'No. 3' salient. So, against that same part of the curtain General Khrouleff at last had resolved to deliver his promised assault.

Along with other bodies of infantry the two chosen Azoff battalions were drawn up under the shelter afforded by the Jewish burial-ground; and bringing up his two reserve batteries to within grape-shot range of the parapet, General Khrouleff caused the part of the ramparts marked out for assault to be well plied with round-shot and shell, but also with blasts of mitrail. Then, after a while, the almost abrupt cessation of this artillery-fire portended a coming of infantry; and at last—in columns of companies—the two battalions approached. They attained to within some twenty-five yards of the ditch, but were then beaten back by the fire of the

place. Soon, however, they rallied, and were advancing once more when — stricken again by the fire from the parapet — they again began to fall back.

Rallied yet once again, and yet once again brought to move forward, the two Azoff battalions, this time, reached ground almost close to the ditch; but—assailed as before by the Osmanli's withering fire—they yet again shrank from its blast; and, their movement of simple recoil lapsing now into final retreat, they made off—with no aid from 'supports'—to regain, if they could, their old shelter under the walls of the Jewish burial-ground. Yet, to do even this unmolested was more than their foes would allow them; for now—led out opportunely from the Perekop gate, and then facing half-about to its left—a Turkish battalion pressed forward with bayonets fixed, sprang intent on the beaten columns retreating across its front, and apparently so pushed them northwards as to prevent their yet reaching the shelter of even the nearest burial-ground. Nor was this the last blow they sustained; for before their retrograde movement had brought them even so far as the wall of the Russian burial-ground, a new disturber appeared on what—since they began to fall back—had become of course their right hand. With some two hundred horsemen who constituted what was almost the whole of Omar's then landed cavalry, Iskender Bey trotted up on the flank of the beaten battalions, cut them off from the shelter of the Russian burial-ground, and pressed their retreat in the

CHAP. II.

open till one of them—formed up at last in a hollow square—proved able to stop the pursuit.

General Todleben has sought to account for this little discomfiture by saying that the water found in the Ditch was a surprise upon the assailants, and that the ladders they brought were too short to be serviceable for the planned escalade; but he also has stated a circumstance that well might have more lasting weight than any slight physical obstacle, or any mechanic defect in the Russian preparatives. A strange revulsion took place in the opinion of General Khrouleff. When he found himself closely engaged with the valorous Turks, that sanguine anticipation of his which had lifted him up into power was turned to nought all at once by an access of chilling despair. He suddenly found himself sure that, to take Eupatoria would cost the Russians enormous losses — cost them losses so great that even at the price of the greatest sacrifices they would not be, after all, able to hold their ground in the place.* So, conforming—conforming too late, and under the stress of a fight—to what the good Teuton had counselled before being rudely supplanted, this more fiery, less steadfast Sclave accepted the trebled repulses of his two vanquished Azoff battalions as putting an end to the strife.

After what proved a farewell discharge from Khrouleff's line of artillery, his general retreat began, and it was not molested, since Omar, scarce having more than one full squadron of horse, could

* Todleben, p. 695.

undertake no pursuit. At half-past ten o'clock in the morning, the engagement had come to an end.

In killed and wounded the Russians lost some 800 men, and the garrison about half that number.*

The enemy's acquiescence in this repulse.

This repulse in itself might seem only a trifling discomfiture, yet (as oftentimes happens in war) was destined to gather some weight from the fact of its proving conclusive. From the moment of Khrouleff's retreat to the end of the war, Russia always acquiesced in the briefly delivered arbitrament of the 17th of February, and thenceforth left to her foes the absolute, unchallenged ownership of that Eupatoria which, as many advisers believed, was the key, was the true master-key for laying open Sebastopol.

Why 'the key,' though held fast, was not used, we shall by-and-by have means of seeing.

* More exactly, the Russian loss is put at 769 (Todleben, p. 696), and the loss of the garrison (including 13 French) at 387.—Colonel Simmons to Lord Raglan, Feb. 18, 1855. Of the native Tartars also 24 were either killed or wounded.—Ibid.

CHAPTER III.

THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS.

CHAP. III.

The Czar's feelings after his discomfiture before Eupatoria;

ALTHOUGH the little discomfiture thus sustained by the Russians was only one of the kind that soldiers call a 'repulse,' the Czar Nicholas still felt it acutely as another of the humbling blows dealt him by those very Turks whom he had loved to imagine less warlike than his own highly disciplined troops.

his illness.

By relieving Prince Mentschikoff of the command he perhaps found some vent for his feelings, yet could not allay his anguish, and — continuing to grieve—he fell ill.

Subsequent rumours.

Weeks after, the voices of Rumour grew busy with more tragic versions of what at this time had been happening; but the Palace account after all seemed for once better worthy of credence than the whispered assurances; and at least one may say that it harmonised with what we know of the facts.

Power of grief over the body.

Grief perhaps may have rarely killed men by direct and summary means, but at least it can do piteous harm to a human body, whilst also it can weaken the springs by which Nature, if not thus beset, might perhaps win a way back to health. Official state-

ments have told us that the Emperor's malady was 'paralysis' of a part of his lungs; and whether so called, with strict accuracy, or more properly deserving the name of what Science here terms 'Congestion,' this disorder was certainly one of which the immediate cause may have well been a 'want of heart-power.' Now, 'want of heart-'power,' we know, is a kind of bodily ailment not unfrequently brought on by grief; and thus, putting all together, we see that the Palace accounts of this illness are consistent, so far as they go, with the commonly accepted belief—the belief that it sprang from a sense of humiliation, entailing bitter anguish of mind.

Official account of the Czar's malady.

This consistent with the belief that it was brought about by grief.

The bare sequence of facts ran thus:—The Czar's troops were repulsed by the Turks on the 17th of February: the cruel wires of the telegraph soon forced him to know the truth; and he died on the 2d of March.

Sequence of facts.

Death of the Czar.

In that pregnant time of a former year when the question between continued peace and eventual war still hung in a trembling balance, Lord Stratford one day at Therapia received a communication from Dundas which—read as he knew how to read it—imported the ending of doubt—imported the—not yet immediate but—sure approach of war. Then, whilst yet in the presence of one who had come in all haste with a duplicate of the Admiral's words, he fell into a mood so abstracted as to be pacing

The personal contention thus brought to end.

CHAP. III.

up and down the long room with the air of a man half forgetting that he was not alone, who, although he allowed a few words to drop from his lips, was still rather intent on reflection than wishing to make his thoughts known. With something of sadness he said :—'Well, well, there'll be war; the Em-'peror has chosen to make this a personal question 'against me, and he must take the consequences.'

On the 2d of March 1855, the misery of 'taking 'the consequences' had at last been endured to the full by unhappy Nicholas; and, although the war might still rage, there at least was on that day an end of the great single combat maintained through many a year between the once haughty Czar and the always haughty Ambassador.

It is interesting to know, as I do, that—magnanimous in spite of his wrath — the Ambassador had always acknowledged the best, the noblest qualities of his Imperial adversary, regarding him even as one who, by Russians with Russian ideas, might well be revered and admired.

The Emperor's noble face after death wore an air of majestic repose; and perhaps gave support to a writer who brought himself to believe that this man, after all, though betrayed into wrong and sinuous paths, when vanity had weakened his judgment, was not without love of honour.*

The fate of Nicholas.

The fate of the Emperor Nicholas may be said to have furnished a sample of good, wholesome justice administered to a highly placed criminal.

* See *ante*, vol. i. cap. iv.

CHAP. III.

Justice administered to a highly placed criminal.

From that fatal hour in 1853, when he despatched Prince Mentschikoff to the Porte, he had been encountering a lengthened series of reverses both diplomatic and warlike; had been publicly forced to disgorge that 'material guarantee,' as he called it, which he had ostentatiously seized; had been defeated on the Alma, defeated at Inkerman; had so quickly repressed his outrageous, though not steadfast, pride as to be treating already for peace with invaders close fastened on Russia; and now writhing under the agony of a military discomfiture once more inflicted upon him by the valorous Turks —whom he had thought he could venture to scorn —he died, it seems, at the last from ills due to his sense of disgrace, a humbled, coerced, and even disciplined man, believed by some who well knew him to be conquered in mind, and yearning to end the war on almost heart-breaking terms. Nor did sympathy with the fallen, this time, undo any part of the good that is wrought by chastising great criminals. Men remembered that the Czar had been cruel.

We long ago saw that despite his fond love of details connected with soldiering, this Czar was an unwarlike man. Believing that he could best serve his cause by attending to business at home, he still—far away at St Petersburg—went on inspecting, inspecting—inspecting troops to the last; and, indeed, it was when he came in after one of these

CHAP. III.

tasks that an uneasy panting for breath disclosed his fatal illness. To judge from those letters of his which have happened to meet the light, he did not at all understand the wondrous defence of Sebastopol. I can hardly indeed even say that he knew who defended the place, for in all of the letters I have seen, he omits the illustrious name! He was not a sovereign worthy of so great a subject as Todleben.

By initiating that strife for Sebastopol from which neither they nor the Czar could recede without something like shame, the Allies had built up a new quarrel less easy perhaps to assuage than the one which a few months before had caused them to take up arms; but now besides, there was danger that —freshly acceding to empire—a Czar more gentle than Nicholas might scarcely have power enough to make his subjects content with a plainly inglorious peace.

Thus, strangely enough, it resulted that the prospects of peace were not strengthened by even the death of a Czar who, without the advice or support of any true statesman, had recklessly brought on the war.

CHAPTER IV.

SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL FROM THE MIDDLE OF FEBRUARY 1855 TO THE SECOND WEEK OF APRIL.

I.

Morning of the 22d of February.

LOOKING out in the early morning—the morning of the 22d of February—from their works of 'approach' on Mount Inkerman the French descried a new object which excited at first curiosity, then graver attention, but still, it would seem, did not cause any anxious foreboding of evil. What they saw was a white-looking circlet or loop which somehow had come to appear on the ground lying north-west before them.*

Sight observed by the French.

Portending, as we now so well know, a fresh and mighty development of the enemy's defensive resources, and—by consequence—a long, long frustration of all the besieger's fond hopes, this white circlet flung round a knoll on the north-western side of Mount Inkerman did not instantly show its full import to even the more skilled observers.

The white circlet or loop had been made in the

* The white line had its angles, but seen from afar appeared rounded.

CHAP. IV.

night-time by workmen whose diggings laid bare an extended, re-entering strip of the natural lime-stone rock; and of course the new object imported some fresh creation of earth-works; but why a garrison busied in defending Sebastopol should come out far from their lines to fasten with pick-axe and spade on a part of Mount Inkerman, few or none at first seemed to divine.

Todleben's inferences from what the Allies had been visibly doing.

Yet the new apparition sprang out of a piece of sound knowledge which by acts—not unseen from afar—the Allies had themselves disclosed to their keen, sagacious adversary.

To seam the hills with fresh earth-work on the sites we saw chosen for the 'King' and the 'Artilleur' batteries, and to do this under the field-glass of the enemy's keen engineer, was to tell him as though in plain speech of the great change of counsel to which the besiegers had come; for, although the two embryo works then newly appearing before him stood distant the one from the other, he perceived them to be both plainly meant for the same immediate purpose, because visibly fashioned for guns which would cross their fires on the Mamelon, and the interposed neck of ground that divided it from the Malakoff front.

Inferring thence that the Mamelon must be the proximate object of attack, and one plainly craved as a stepping-stone from which to spring at the Malakoff, he quickly went on to convince himself that the more early measures to be taken for its defence must be—not on the Mamelon itself, but—

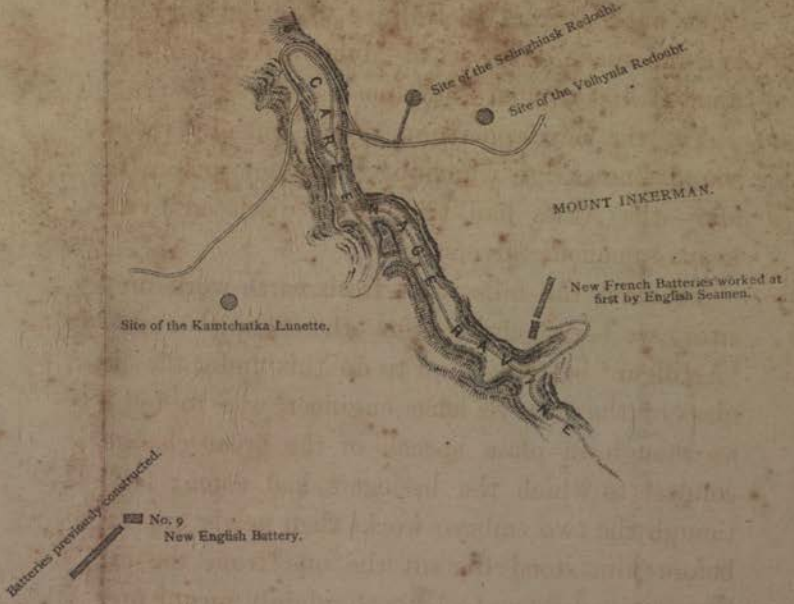

Site of the Selinghinsk Redoubt.
Site of the Volhynia Redoubt.
MOUNT INKERMAN.
New French Batteries worked at first by English Seamen.
Site of the Kamtchatka Lunette.
Batteries previously constructed.
No. 9
New English Battery.

DIAGRAM illustrating the design and purpose of Todleben's Counterapproaches in the Faubourg of the Karabelnaya.

SCALE OF 2 INCHES TO A STATUTE MILE.

0 2 MILES

on ground far away towards his left; for he judged that the new French 'approaches' then making their way on Mount Inkerman would bring his opponents to ground whence their batteries might take the Mamelon in flank, take it even almost in reverse; and he conceived that it could not be held, if assailed in that way, whilst also under the fire of the 'King' and the 'Artilleur' batteries. He therefore resolved that, to defend the Mamelon, he must arrest the new French 'approaches' on his left front, and that, to do this effectually, he must move out beyond the near borderland of his Faubourg defences, must cross the Careenage Ravine, must ascend the steep hillside above it, and construct a new system of Works on the north-western heights of Mount Inkerman. The new system of Works, whilst fulfilling its primary object, and baffling the Inkerman approaches, might also, he saw, be conducing to an ulterior purpose—might give him the means of directing such a fire towards the south as would cover his efforts to fortify the Mamelon in the teeth of the French, thus barring their road to the Malakoff.

His counteracting plans.

In determining to take this bold course, he was moved by yet one other reason; for he hoped that by arresting the approaches of the French on Mount Inkerman he might prevent them from attaining to ground whence their batteries would be able to drive off all Russian ships from the eastern part of the Roadstead.

The steps he took were like those which besiegers—and not the besieged—are commonly wont to adopt.

His Selinghinsk Redoubt.

CHAP. IV.

Having taped down beforehand the lines of his newly planned Work, and already bespoken such aid as the ships in the Roadstead could give, he at night on the 21st of February moved out with seven battalions commanded by General Khroustchoff, crossed the chasm of the Careenage Ravine, ascended to the heights of Mount Inkerman, and there under shelter of darkness laid hands on the fore-chosen site.

To cover his designed operation, the four Volhynia battalions drew up on a front placed half-way between the newly marked site and the foremost of the enemy's trenches; whilst the three Selinghinsk battalions which made up the rest of the force were charged to construct the planned work, and with all the speed they could use to make it grow under their hands. These men—each with his musket beside him—were kept in a state of readiness to lay down their tools, and to take instant part as combatants whenever the need might occur; but they toiled undisturbed the first night, and when morning broke, it was seen that the cover already obtained by dint of pickaxe and spade and gabions rapidly filled was even then solid enough to be good against musketry-fire. This Work, after the name of the regiment which bore the toil of constructing it, was called the Selinghinsk Redoubt.

So, the white-looking circlet or loop which met the gaze of the French on the morning of the 22d, marked simply the slight, early rudiments of a new, though fast-growing earth-work—the Selinghinsk

Redoubt, and the firstling of those 'Ouvrages blancs'—for so our allies always called them— which were destined to play no small part in the subsequent defence of Sebastopol.

Colonel Todleben did not suppose that the French, when seeing his purpose, would brook this counter-approach, and in concert with General Khroustchoff prepared to resist their attacks.

So long as day lasted, the troops not busied in working were withdrawn to sheltered ground near at hand; but, when darkness returned on the 22d, and again on the 23d, the four Volhynia battalions were thrown forward once more to the ground they had held the first night, and they ranged in what, with their people, was the favourite order of battle, that is, with, in front, a line of skirmishers, next, a line of small company columns, and in support to all, a line of three columns each massed, and comprising each one whole battalion. With their muskets at hand, the men of the Selinghinsk battalions still toiled at the new redoubt.

II.

French night attack on the Selinghinsk Redoubt.

Except by distant musketry-fire, producing but little effect, the French did not molest the new Work until the night of the 23d, or rather the early morning of the 24th. They then undertook to assault it with a force of three battalions, supported by two more in reserve, and entrusted the command of the troops to

CHAP. IV.

General Mayran. The attacking part of the force was under the immediate orders of General Monet, and consisted of one battalion column of Zouaves at each flank and one of Marines in the centre. The two battalions ordained to be held in reserve were selected from the troops of the Line.

When the moon had gone down, General Monet's three battalions moved forward; and, although the expedient of attacking at night was not destined to give them the advantage of surprising the enemy, they made good their advance with great spirit, driving in both the line of skirmishers and the line of company columns which constituted the front of the Volhynia regiment, and apparently forcing back also two out of its three massed battalions. The ships in the Roadstead and even the Karabel batteries soon began to intervene with their thunder, if not indeed with their blows;(1) but the onset of the French was not checked. The battalion of Zouaves on the right of the assailing force was commanded by Colonel Cler—a daring and brilliant officer much liked and admired by our people. At the head of his Zouaves he turned the flank of the Russians, and pushed forward so vigorously that before long, he carried the tumult of midnight fighting to ground on the left—Russian left—of the growing redoubt. To meet the stress of battle brought thither, the unengaged column of the Volhynia regiment was by Khroustchoff moved laterally from his right towards the ground on his left where the Russians were most hotly pressed.

CHAP. IV.

Before long, it resulted that the four Volhynia battalions with some men of the Selinghinsk intermixed became gathered irregularly in advance of the new Redoubt and presented to their assailants a broad, concave front.

Like their comrades on the right, the Zouaves on the opposite flank of the assailing force had by this time pressed forward with vigour, and a corresponding effort of will on the part of the centre column (with which General Monet was present) might perhaps have enabled the French to deliver their final assault with a great compactness and weight; but this column was seemingly weakened by the absence of some of the men who had lost their way in the darkness;(2) and besides, it unhappily chanced that General Monet now received several wounds. Finding himself compelled to give up the command, he handed it over to Cler, who was called away from the right in order to receive his new charge.

Cler, however, soon returned to his Zouave battalion, taking with him all the troops that he found on his road. Then in person going up to the Work he knocked over the gabions revetting a part of its counterscarp, crossed its Ditch, overthrowing the Russians there gathered, and mounted the parapet. To be there was to learn, notwithstanding the interposed darkness, that the Redoubt and its precincts were swarming with troops;* and those of the French who had till then remained alive on the parapet were forced back into the Ditch and there

* Obviously the bulk of the Selinghinsk battalions.

CHAP. IV.

surrounded by Russians coming from all directions. To the fire of musketry then converging on the French there seemed to be added the fire from ships in the Roadstead and even from the Faubourg Defences. Still as yet—because not without hope that reinforcements might come—Colonel Cler stood his ground in the fosse.

Where General Mayran was posted at this turning moment, or why he judged it expedient to withhold reinforcements, I am unable to say; but becoming, it seems, convinced that his foremost troops were in danger of being overwhelmed by numbers, he caused the retreat to be sounded.

Thereupon Colonel Cler passed back over the counterscarp, led the men acting with him against the host of Russians who were barring his path, clove a way through their ranks with the bayonet or the musket-stock used as a club, and rejoined the rest of the force which General Monet had led.

The thus reunited French force made good its retreat without seemingly being pursued.

General Mayran did not bring into action the troops which formed his 'reserve.'

The fight lasted an hour.*

In killed, wounded, and missing the French lost some 270,† and the Russians rather more than 400.‡

The reports of this fight made to Canrobert

* Niel's narrative of the combat is in p. 152 *et seq.*, and Todleben's (vol. ii.) in p. 27 *et seq.*

† Including a few who were struck in the daytime of the 23d, they officially acknowledged a loss of 275.—Niel, p. 154.

‡ Todleben, vol. ii. p. 30.

CHAP. IV.

and by him despatched to Lord Raglan, conveyed a full assurance that by dislodging the enemy and demolishing his redoubt the enterprise had been victoriously achieved;(3) and Lord Raglan, on Canrobert's authority, imparted at once to his Government what seemed true and joyful intelligence.* He afterwards saw General Canrobert, and learnt from him that he had not received any further account of the fight.†

False report of this fight made to Canrobert.

Lord Raglan afterwards visited the brave General Monet, and found him laid up with five wounds. Several other French officers were present, including Colonel Cler, the hero of the right wing. All spoke with truthful candour of the late night-attack, and simply called it a failure.‡

When the truth at last made its sure way to the French at headquarters, they seemed to be gravely distressed.§

On what caused not only the error of mistaking a repulse for a victory, but also the ugly scandal of a French commander-in-chief being put, and long kept in the dark by his own trusted officers, a veil was indulgently thrown.

When asking on the 24th for a truce in order to bury the dead, General Osten-Sacken preferred his request with exuberant politeness, and accompanied it by an acknowledgment of the 'exemplary intre-

Truce for burying the dead.

* Despatch to Secretary of State, 24th February 1855.

† Lord Raglan to Lord Panmure, Private Letter, March 27, 1855.

‡ 'Un coup manqué.'—Lord Raglan to Lord Panmure, Feb. 27, 1855.

§ Ibid.

CHAP. IV.

'pidity' which the French had displayed in the fight. The communication excited much interest, and even some speculation.

III.

Reason of the French for not renewing the attack.

The French did not renew their attack. Convincing themselves that, if captured, the Selinghinsk Redoubt might be swept by so potent a fire of artillery as would make it untenable, they resolved, however unwillingly, that they needs must stand by acquiescent whilst the enemy—losing no moments—completed and armed his new Work.*

The Volhynia Redoubt.

And this bold encroachment effected under their eyes was only, after all, a beginning of the counter-approaches with which the Czar's great engineer was minded to try their patience. Seizing ground that lay towards the left front of the newly formed Work, he there, on the night of the 28th of February, began to construct yet another one of a similar kind which was called the Volhynia Redoubt;† and, the French once more acquiescing, he made haste, as may well be supposed, to render it stronger and stronger with every day suffered to pass.

Continued acquiescence of the French.

Import and effect of these counter-works on Mount Inkerman.

New counter-works thus springing up to challenge the new French approaches were all the more galling to some French and English observers because perceived to be fastening on a part of their Inkerman battle-field, and so taking away with the pickaxe

* Niel, p. 154. † Todleben, vol. ii. p. 32.

CHAP. IV.

what soldiers had won with the sword; but men of skill knew that the check was other than one of a sentimental kind. It was painfully real.

Decisions of the French on finding themselves thus confronted.

Our allies by this time saw the object at which their foe must be aiming. They even indeed divined his ulterior purpose, and perceived that these new works of his would enable him to attempt with advantage the fortification of the Mamelon, thus throwing perhaps a strong barrier directly across that one path by which they could reach the Malakoff. With this clearly scanned prospect before them, they still resolved to abstain from storming the newly reared Works which now formidably obstructed their siege, and made to themselves instead a kind of promise or vow—not destined to receive its fulfilment—that, so soon as the enemy should try to plant any field-work on the coveted Mamelon, they would carry it at once by assault.*

Meanwhile, their counsels induced them to await the actual happening of the apprehended contingency, and not undertake to avert it.†

IV.

Council assembled, but with little prospect of advantage.

However, the question whether the Allies should submit to these aggressions was one of course meriting their joint consideration, and accordingly, a Council assembled; but not with any good prospect of being able to choose a vigorous course of action;

* Niel, p. 157. † Ibid.

CHAP. IV.

for it was in the teeth of Canrobert's troops that the encroachments had been dared; and, the French having thus proved their readiness to acquiesce in such measures, no words of any English deliberator, whether uttered in Council or not, seemed likely to change their resolve.

Council of the 4th of March.

The longer our allies acquiesced in the spectacle of hostile redoubts thus fastened and fastening on Mount Inkerman, the clearer it seemed that the whole plan of siege which had been adopted on the 1st of January, and ratified on the 2d of February, was being brought under challenge; and, if Todleben had (by witchcraft) been present in the Council of generals which sat at the English headquarters on the 4th of March, he could hardly have failed to exult in that power of his by which he had raised up the fallen, and confounded the design of the victors.

The Council included General Canrobert, Lord Raglan, General Bosquet, General Niel, General Bizot, Sir John Burgoyne,* Sir George Brown, and General Harry Jones. It lasted several hours without coming to any decisive resolve.

Against any proposal requiring them to assail the new works our allies put forward the theory before ascribed to them, and maintained that, even if captured, the ground would not be tenable under the fire that might be brought to bear upon it from three sides.

Burgoyne controverted the opinion thus formed,

* Respecting Burgoyne's presence, see *post*, p. 109.

and maintained that by taking due precautions the evil anticipated might be more or less completely averted.

The Conference determined that the question thus raised should be investigated on the following day by the general officers of engineers belonging to both armies; but meanwhile, went on with its debates, and discussed the general prospects of the siege.

'The difficulties of the attack on Sebastopol were 'a good deal dwelt upon, and were acknowledged to 'be increasing rather than diminishing, and in con- 'sequence of the impediment placed upon the pro- 'gress of offensive operations on the right by the 'bold advance of the enemy in that direction, a 'desire was manifested by the French engineer offi- 'cers to revert to the desperate expedient of an 'assault on the Redan, under circumstances much 'more unfavourable than when it was rejected by 'the Note of the 2d of February, without a simul- 'taneous advance on the Malakoff front.' (4).

The importance of after all endeavouring to take what with normal besiegers has commonly been the first step, that is, to invest the place, or in other words to cut off communication between Sebastopol and the Russian field-army, was much dwelt upon; * whilst General Canrobert—and not for the first time —declared his opinion to be that, if from any cause Omar Pasha should be unable to act upon the rear or flank of the enemy from Eupatoria, he should be

* No doubt by Niel. See the next chapter, and the Appendix, Note (2), thereto annexed.

CHAP. IV.

requested to come to the Chersonese with two-thirds of his army.

Lord Raglan stated his reasons for not at all sharing the opinion thus formed by General Canrobert.*

Adjourned Conference sitting on the 6th of March.

The French and English engineers did not come to any agreement, and the adjourned Conference sat again on the 6th of March. Then, the French making no proposal, Burgoyne submitted a memorandum recommending an attack on the Selinghinsk and Volhynia Redoubts with a view to drive the enemy effectually from that part of the ground. He urged that the French objections to that plan were not of the importance apprehended, and that the French Note of the 2d of February (in which all had concurred) could never be carried into effect without first obliging the Russians to loose their new hold on Mount Inkerman.

General Canrobert and the French officers attending him 'did not consider his [Burgoyne's] scheme, 'nor the reasoning by which Sir John Burgoyne 'supported it, to be well founded; and they at once 'declared their determination not again to attempt 'to drive the enemy from his new works.' (5)

A weak resolve that for months kept back and kept down the Allies!

For a purpose no longer worth notice, the Conference directed an examination of some specified ground, but did nothing more.†

* Despatch marked 'Secret,' from Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, March 6, 1855.

† Despatch (Secret) from Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, March 10, 1855.

CHAP. IV.

Late in the evening of the 8th of March, General Canrobert came to Lord Raglan's headquarters, and again urged that it should be proposed to Omar Pasha to come to the Chersonese with a considerable part of his army. Lord Raglan saw no reason for changing his former opinion; but consented that (with a view to full discussion of the question) Omar Pasha, with also Sir Edmund Lyons and Admiral Bruat, should be invited to attend a Conference on the following Monday. In his almost passionate eagerness to have Turkish troops on the Chersonese, General Canrobert refused them French aid for any operations elsewhere. He announced that he could not reinforce Omar Pasha whilst at Eupatoria with any force at all of either cavalry or infantry.*

8th March. Canrobert renewing his endeavours to obtain Turkish reinforcements.

Whilst the Allies were thus vainly deliberating, their adversary was acting, and acting with ceaseless vigour.

The 'Volhynia' Work was completed in the course of ten days; and the armament which the two new Redoubts had received on the 10th of March comprised twenty-two pieces of cannon.†

Completion and armament of the two White Redoubts.

V.

The pair of Grand-Dukes whom we saw driving into Sebastopol on the eve of the battle of Inkerman were destined to pass as the harbingers of Russian enterprise; and their return to the Crimea soon

Arrival of the young Grand-Dukes Nicholas and Michael.

* Ibid. † Todleben, vol. ii. pp. 34, 35.

CHAP. IV.

after Todleben's enterprise of the 21st of February was rightly thought to portend an increase of warlike activity.

The Mamelon.

To have a strong hold on the Mamelon—this, we saw, was the object of besieged and besiegers alike—the object for which they were toiling on several distant hills—but it had not been up to this time the chosen scene of their efforts. Lightly held—though of course duly watched—by an outpost of Russian infantry, it had neither been touched by the pickaxe nor assaulted by troops, nor even approached by 'approaches'; but on the morning of the 10th of March, its time of repose was drawing fast to an end.

Advice of Bizot to Canrobert,

By that time, the jointly planned Works of the French and the English—the 'King' and the 'Artilleur' batteries—were closely approaching completion, and Bizot, the commander of the French engineers, proposed to General Canrobert that on the following night the Mamelon should be seized by his troops.*

declined.

General Canrobert met the proposal by a reason of great scope and gravity, which shall be afterwards stated, and brought himself to resolve that he would not hazard the step.†

Night of the 10th of March, Todleben establishing a Work on the Mamelon.

On the night of that very same day, the enemy passed into action. Colonel Todleben at last gave reality to what from the time of his planning the two White Redoubts, had been his ulterior purpose, and prepared a new, unwelcome spectacle for

* Niel, p. 168. † Ibid., p. 169.

CHAP. IV.

those of our baffled allies who held the Victoria Ridge.* Looking towards the north-west on the morning of the 11th of March, they saw that during the night, their great adversary had been fastening on the Mamelon, and that there, with the rudiments of a Work plainly meant to defend it he already had saddled the Ridge.† Though as yet of course only inchoate, this new barrier—the Kamtchatka Lunette—lay directly across the one path by which the French could advance against the Malakoff front, and they knew that they must needs overcome the interposed obstacle, if they meant to go on with the siege in accordance with their last ordained plan. They, however, could still question whether their more prudent course would be to attack the new outwork at once whilst still only in embryo, or wait until it should grow up to the estate of a completed Lunette, and be bristling with guns. The alternative which forbade a recourse to any speedy assault was the one the French chose; and accordingly on the following night—the night of the 11th—they opened their first parallel against the young, tender 'Work,' not then one day old;‡ thus almost repeating in miniature the all-involving mistake of the previous autumn—the mistake of 'besieging' an embryo.

Sight greeting the French on the morning of the 11th.

The Kamtchatka Lunette.

Deliberations of the French in face of this new apparition.

Their resolve not to assault the new work;

To enter on a course of 'approaches' was to give the enemy time; and time of course was the blessing he craved for his infant Lunette. So whilst day

but to proceed against it by 'approaches.'

* Todleben, vol. ii. p. 46 *et seq.*

† Niel, p. 167.

‡ Ibid., p. 170.

CHAP. IV.

after day, and night after night, his antagonists worked in their trenches, he was driving on the completion of his newly interposed outwork, and covering both its front and its flanks with a double chain of 'lodgments.'

The Allies before long brought a powerful fire of artillery to bear on the growing Lunette, and the French battled hard—battled even on the whole with advantage—for some of its covering 'lodgments'; but—taken alone—no such measures were sufficing to carry the Work; and, since (under the bonds of that reason which had held back their general on the 10th of March) the French as yet were not minded to undertake an assault, they had to bear the torment of seeing or otherwise knowing that every day, every night, their unwearied adversary was bringing his Work towards completeness. He finished it on the 21st of March;* and by that time had not only armed it with ten 24-pounder guns,† but covered it too by the fire of twelve other pieces of ordnance for that purpose planted in battery on chosen sites less in advance.‡

21st March. Todleben's completion and armament of his Kamtchatka Lunette.

VI.

As may well be supposed, this condition of things proved distressing to both the French and the English, but of course to the French more especially,

* Niel, p. 175.
† Todleben, p. 55.
‡ Ibid., p. 57.

since theirs, as it chanced, was the army, and theirs too the anxious commander, confronted, mocked, baffled, perplexed by the enemy's advancing encroachments.

Mortifying and perplexing effect of Todleben's counter-works.

The third stage of Todleben's triumph began, as we saw, on the night of the 10th of March, and that day (at an earlier hour) was also the one on which Canrobert — after carefully weighing the question—brought himself to reject the proposal of his chief engineer, and abstain from seizing the Mamelon—an enterprise that appeared to be almost peremptorily required for the advancement of the siege, and besides to be one recommended by many favouring circumstances.

Canrobert's reason for declining to seize the Mamelon.

Then, by what course of reasoning was it that Canrobert maintained his conclusion? What restrained him, according to Niel, and prevented his seizing the Mamelon was—not any grave apprehension of the obstacles his troops might encounter whilst performing so simple a task, but rather—a belief that the measure would provoke some great sortie directed against the guards of the trenches, thus bringing about an engagement of more or less extended dimensions, and doing so under conditions which he judged to be disadvantageous.* Whether sound, or deceptive, the objection was one of vast scope; for, if valid against that proposal of the 10th of March which asked General Canrobert to seize what was then an unfortified knoll, it would seemingly prove no less adverse to any real step in advance that

The vast scope of his objection.

* Niel, pp. 168, 169.

CHAP. IV.

could well be conceived; for how to carry Sebastopol without doing some act of aggression? And, how to plan an act of aggression which the enemy, if such were his mood, might not answer with powerful sorties? And, again, how on earth to contrive that any engagement thus generated should take place under conditions well fitted to please the besieger—to please a besieger so circumstanced that, whether for conquest or whether for safety, he must fight under the guns of Sebastopol, with before him a labyrinth of mighty defences, and behind him the sea and sea-cliffs? To harbour such an objection whether sound or fallacious was plainly to open a path that led down towards despondency; and, although of course none can be sure that the painful decision of Canrobert may not have averted disasters, it is hard to see how a commander, whilst haunted by forecasts so dismal, could be keeping his mind or his will in the iron condition required for breaking into Sebastopol.

Its dangerous tendency.

Marshal Niel in recording the objection did not either support or condemn it; but—pursuing his fixed idea—he took care to insist that the fact of its having stayed Canrobert, and prevented him from seizing the Mamelon, brought out into strong relief the inherent vice of that policy which had turned the conquerors of the Alma into hampered besiegers.* And indeed the original error of laying siege to Sebastopol without forces meet for the purpose might well seem more glaring than ever to the

Niel's comment on the objection.

* Niel, p. 169.

official narrator when he not only heard Science telling him that no belligerent weak enough to be confronted in a serious engagement by the garrison of a fortress can have any warrant in reason for attempting to reduce it by siege, but also saw her teaching illustrated by the predicament of General Canrobert, who could not dare drive in an outpost for fear of provoking a battle.*

Canrobert's determination to abstain from assaulting the embryo Lunette.

The 'reason' which had prevented Canrobert from consenting on the 10th of March to seize the then unfortified Mamelon proved sufficiently strong to deter him from assaulting the embryo Work which had newly grown over its surface.†

Representation on this subject imparted by Lord Raglan to Canrobert.

To our people the notion of suffering the enemy to construct a defensive Work on the path—the one path—which could lead our allies to the Malakoff, seemed almost the same as abandoning the main design of the siege; and, to deprecate such acquiescence, our chief engineer drew up a memorandum 'on the expediency of occupying the Mamelon,' which Lord Raglan imparted to Canrobert;‡ but all this insistence proved vain; and the Mamelon—growing daily in strength—continued to remain unassaulted.

* Cormontaigne, Mémorial pour l'attaque des places, cap. vi., cited Niel, pp. 181, 182.

† So that the resolve which I called the 'vow' was disregarded. See *ante*, p. 73.

‡ Despatch, 'Secret,' to Secretary of State, March 17, 1855.

CHAP. IV.

VII.

The gloomy apprehensions of Canrobert imparted to Lord Raglan.

Meanwhile, the French commander had been going yet further and further on that gloomy road towards despondency which his reasoning, as we saw, had laid open.* 'General Canrobert,' writes Lord Raglan, 'taking rather a gloomy view of what might possibly 'arise, represented that it was probable that when 'the Allies should open their fire upon Sebastopol, 'the enemy would attempt a general attack upon us, 'making a sortie with 20,000 men on the extreme 'left of the French with a view to reach their ship- 'ping and establishments at Kamiesh, and assailing 'at the same time the right of our position on this 'ridge with 40,000 men, and the ground in front 'of Balaclava with an equal force by a simultaneous 'movement. He expressed also some apprehension 'that, if this great operation should be undertaken, 'the Allies, occupied as they would be by the Siege, 'might be overpowered.'

Lord Raglan's comment;

'Sir Edmund Lyons and myself were surprised to 'hear him hold such desponding language. I ven- 'tured to express my opinion that the tone of his 'observations was somewhat serious.'†

and its tendency to relieve his despondency.

Whether Canrobert felt, or felt not, that this reception of his anxious forebodings implied a gently veiled censure, he well may have quitted the room a much happier and a much stronger man than when he came in. The greater the diversity of character,

* See *ante*, p. 81.

† Despatch marked 'Secret' to Secretary of State, 13th March 1855.

sentiment, habit, and social station between any two men in council, the abler will one of them be to allay the other's despondency. It is amongst men ground down to a state of what the French call 'equality' that panic revels and spreads.

Lord Raglan's power of repressing despondency.

'In those times of trial,' said one who best knew Lord Raglan, 'he ceased to be equal with other men.' . . . 'Without dissembling facts, he would 'calmly withhold his assent to all gloomy apprehen- 'sions, and manfully force attention to the special 'business in hand, and thus—or rather perhaps by 'a kind of power that cannot be traced or described 'in words—he threw upon those who conversed 'with him the spell of his own undaunted nature. 'Men went to him anxious and perturbed. They 'came away firm.'*

Did this change Canrobert's tone?

May it be that—in part from their contact with the mind of Lord Raglan—the spirit of the French commander began to undergo a great change? What we know is that, having spoken to Lord Raglan in the 'desponding language' above recorded of the battle that he thought might be provoked by the re-opening of the fire, General Canrobert (in addressing his Emperor†) soon after began to point out that very same dreaded contingency as one for which he was yearning.(6)

Allusion to recent disclosures.

* Speech of General Airey to the Board of General Officers.

† See his words to the Emperor of the 10th of April, in which he speaks of the previously dreaded contingency as 'cette attaque désirée 'avec tant de raison;' Rousset, ii. p. 147; and his letter to the Emperor of the 19th May, ibid., p. 178 *et seq.*, partly quoted also *post*, in Appendix to chap. xi. p. 375. See also reference to these letters *post*, chap. viii. and chap. ix.

CHAP. IV.

In common with but few of his time (of whom Lord John Russell was one) Lord Raglan was able to write a sentence so naturally that it recalled the very sound of his voice. So to read the five following lines is like hearing Lord Raglan speak, nay almost like seeing him smile: 'I think our friends '[meaning the French] are a little uneasy, and are 'anxious for the arrival of some of the Turkish army 'from Eupatoria; but they continue,' he archly adds, 'to have full confidence in their English allies.' *

VIII.

Vigorous advance of the French 'approaches' against the new Lunette.

General Bizot, meanwhile, had been pushing on his 'approaches' with a good deal of vigour; and before many days, the moment seemed to be near when by working close up to the lodgments he might convert a whole chain of them into a new parallel, and thus become clothed with a power which would put the Lunette in grave danger.

Anxiety of the enemy to check them.

To check the advance of 'approaches' which threatened such consequences, and perhaps at the same time to compass an object of yet greater moment, the Russians judged it expedient to hazard a step that might cost them a not trifling sacrifice of men.

His sorties, 22d of March;

So, on the night of the 22d of March, the enemy undertook an adventure with a much greater number of troops than are commonly charged with the task of making a sortie in darkness.

* To Lord Panmure, 30th March 1855.

THE GREAT NIGHT SORTIE OF THE 22nd OF MARCH,
showing positions reached by the assailants.

CHAP. IV.

His great sortie against the French.

He effected four sorties (of which we shall afterwards hear) against his English besieger, thus largely extending the front of his great night attack, but still threw the main weight of his onslaught on that chosen part of the ground where our French allies were engaged in sapping their way towards the Mamelon.

The night was dark, and a wind blowing high intercepted the sound of troops marching, when at about ten o'clock nine battalions of infantry commanded by General Khrouleff moved out from the flanks of the Kamtchatka Lunette along the Victoria Ridge; and, another battalion acceding, it was with a strength of no less than 5500 men that the Russians soon came into action.*

What these forces had before them were first, the disputed lodgments, next, the foremost of the new French 'approaches' where (with no troops at all under arms except a few score of Zouaves) 500 men gathered in 'working-parties' were labouring at their appointed tasks, and beyond, the one parallel which as yet had been brought to completion. The French 'guards of the trenches,' that night, were under General d'Autemarre, and comprised four battalions. Three of these were so posted that they could be brought up in time for resistance to Khrouleff's impending attack.

Though not without some hard fighting, and even at one point encountering a somewhat long check, General Khrouleff's battalions recovered the lodg-

* Khrouleff was the general repulsed by the Turks when assailing Eupatoria. See *ante*, chap. ii.

CHAP. IV.

ments which their adversary had been suffered to occupy, advanced to the head of the sap, and invaded the foremost 'approaches,' whence—after, however, encountering a brave and stubborn resistance—they at last drove in the French working-parties along with the handful of Zouaves. After leaving in the 'approaches' thus seized a large number of sailors who there wrought all the havoc they could, Khrouleff's force moved on in pursuit, and did this without being met by any blasts of artillery, since the Frenchmen retreating before it were retreating on the completed parallel, and therefore masking its fire.

Here, however, by this time were gathered the three French battalions which d'Autemarre had within reach; and his force now opposed to the Russians a resistance so strong that those of them who made bold to adventure beyond the parallel met only their deaths, whilst those who remained on its verge soon found themselves engaged in a hot and obstinate fight.

To the enormous preponderance of numbers already enjoyed by the Russians there now acceded a new and unexpected advantage; for—led forward by Enseigne Zavalichine—a little body of troops had by this time moved up a good way upon what one may call English ground along the edge of the Woronzoff Ridge; and thus it came to pass that the French, whilst engaged against the host in their front, now suddenly found themselves stricken by a fire from across the ravine, and moreover from ground so far south that it took their troops in reverse. Under this serious trial, however, the French showed

what on the whole may well be called excellent firmness;* and the enemy on the other hand failed to receive any wholesome impulsion from the sight or the sound of the fire thus newly befriending him. His masses still remained hanging back on the verge of the parallel, and apparently with the loss of their headway they lost all their clearness of purpose. There were glimmers of light in the sky which enabled the French to observe that their assailants were gathering into groups, like men—not stricken with panic, yet—bewildered, and in need of sure guidance. The onset had spent its force, and the counter-sway followed. Whether simply, as Todleben says, obeying their general's signals reiterated again and again, or yielding, as Niel asserts, to the prowess of d'Autemarre's force, the assailants at all points fell back. They were pressed for a while in retreat, but soon found the shelter they needed beneath the guns of the fortress.†

The sorties effected against the English siege-works.

The conflict thus sustained by the French had hardly yet reached its height when their English neighbours, established on the Woronzoff Ridge, were also becoming engaged in what—because now far extending—seemed almost a midnight battle.

* General Todleben says that their left fell into a complete rout 'déroute complète'; but, it being undisputed that the French, on the whole stood fast and repulsed the attack, I have not been brought to think that my statement in the text is unwarranted.

† Todleben, vol. ii. p. 68 *et seq.*; Niel, p. 177 *et seq.* The two accounts are conflicting.

CHAP. IV.

In designing the enterprise levelled against his English adversaries, the enemy did not make the mistake of sending out into the darkness a huge, unwieldy force; but divided his attack on our siege-works into four distinct sorties, each effected with moderate numbers;* whilst he wisely resolved that these columns (which comprised in their ranks many sailors) should all be commanded by naval officers—men whose skill and resources were such that they would know how to steer in the dark. We shall see every one of these captains overcoming the obstacle of darkness, and successfully bringing his craft to the chosen point of attack. †

Colonel Kelly's dispositions.

The 'field officer,' that night, on duty in the precincts of 'Gordon's Attack' was Colonel Kelly; and of the 1200 men he had under him, one-half at first guarded the third or their foremost parallel which (if reckoned with the trench-work prolonging it) may be said to have crossed the whole breadth of the Woronzoff Ridge from the Dockyard Ravine on his right to the Woronzoff Road on his left. These last 600 men were composed of detachments from several regiments, and stood ranged in the order here shown :—

Left.—Rifles, 90th, 34th, 88th, 77th, 97th.—Right.

* I do not undertake to give these numbers except in the case of Béruleff's column.

† It will be remembered that, when advancing by night upon Tel-el-Kebir, our army received welcome guidance from the skill of a naval officer who led it by aid of the stars.

With 300 of his men Colonel Kelly had furnished the 'working-parties' employed that night, under the guidance of Colonel Tylden of the Royal Engineers, and the remaining 300 he kept higher up in reserve. Colonel Kelly enjoyed an advantage which of course for one acting at midnight was beyond measure great—that of having at his side Major Gordon (the directing engineer of the 'Gordon's' or 'Right Attack' siege-works), who thoroughly well knew the ground.*

Marking all that through darkness and storm the eye and the ear could still tell him of the conflict sustained by the French, and learning thus that—though slowly—the enemy had carried their trenches, Colonel Kelly divined that the Russians would very soon turn to their right, and try to make a sweep along the ground in his rear, where the 300 men he had furnished were busy with pickaxe and spade. To prepare against any such onset, Colonel Kelly made these dispositions:—Not disturbing at all the detachment composed of the '97th men' which formed the extreme right of the line, and was critically circumstanced, but resorting instead to the two next detachments (troops furnished by the 77th and 88th Regiments), he shifted them both from their places in the advanced trench, and drew them up at right angles to it, the 77th men foremost, in skirmishing order, supported by the 88th

* The greatly distinguished officer who was afterwards General Sir William Gordon, K.C.B.

CHAP. IV.

men in line.* To take up the positions thus vacated, there came down soon afterwards a fresh detachment —one furnished by the 7th Fusiliers.

Zavalichine's flank movement.

Directed by Enseigne Zavalichine (whose fire, though from "English ground,' had been hitherto poured on French troops), the attack planned against our right flank was opening with some shots from his skirmishers, when under the orders of Boudistcheff, and designed to take effect on our front, a heavier onslaught began.

Boudistcheff's attack.

Greatly favoured of course by the darkness, but also by the roar of a wind overpowering the sound of their march, a body of Russian troops moved out from the lines of Sebastopol, and ascended the Woronzoff Ridge.† Undertaking a front attack on the extreme right wing of our advanced parallel, the column opposed its strength to the detachment of our 97th Regiment — a detachment comprising no more than some 70 or 80 men, but commanded by a brave, warlike officer—by Captain Hedley Vicars.

The column advancing in silence had not seem-

* These dispositions were highly prized by the gifted officer—Major Gordon—who saw them made, and were afterwards officially eulogised by General Eyre, 'the general officer of the trenches.' Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, 27th March 1855.

† 'A force so far as I could judge of at least 800 men.' So writes Colonel Kelly, relying upon such personal observation as was possible in the darkness, but also upon a Russian despatch which purported to give a detail of the forces engaged by the enemy. The estimate, however, cannot be reconciled with Todleben's account.

CHAP. IV.

ingly come up so close as to be yet driving in the out-sentries, when it all at once fired a volley. Then instantly awaiting no orders, entertaining no doubt, and listening only, it seems, to that gallant spirit of his which used always to prompt him in action, Captain Vicars sprang over the parapet, carrying with him the whole of the 70 or 80 men who formed his little detachment, and their ringing cheer, heard amid darkness that gave to every sound a more than treble significance, was the cheer of a soldiery—not halted but—joyously attacking an enemy.

Charge by Vicars with 70 or 80 men of the 97th.

With Gordon still at his side Colonel Kelly was at this moment busied with the lesser affairs of the flank attack, but on ground not far from our advanced parallel; and at the sound of the volley followed close by the cheer, they both of them sped off at once to the new scene of action, and were presently in the midst of the men of the 97th who had newly sprung over the parapet. Gordon sharing the fervour of the soldiery was even lending his voice to the joyous tumult of war when he received a wound from a musket-shot which struck his right arm, and disabled him; but Colonel Kelly running forward overtook Captain Vicars and was presently moving down alongside him against the enemy's column.

Vicars joined by Kelly and Gordon.

It is supposed that, baffled by darkness, the Russians perhaps may have failed to divine the exceeding scantiness of the impetuous little force that assailed them with a strength we have already seen estimated at only about one to ten;* for, when the advance of

Defeat of the column.

* See *ante*, p. 92, and footnote.

CHAP. IV.

our soldiery was becoming, or had nearly become what Englishmen mean by 'a charge,' the column fired a last volley; and then—still hanging together after the manner of Russians in flight—began to retreat at the double, its rear files turning however, and firing back shots whilst they ran.

By one of these Parthian balls there was taken the life of the captain who had ordered and led the charge. Whilst moving eagerly forward at the side of Colonel Kelly, and whilst listening indeed to his words, Hedley Vicars was stricken and killed.

Our soldiery, in spite of the darkness, saw enough to be sure that their cheers were accelerating the flight of the column; and a brave little bugler of the 97th, whose irrepressible zeal kept him always far out towards the front, was unsparing in the use of a power with which he seemed to think himself armed. As he rightly or wrongly imagined, he made the retreating mass spring at the blast of his clarion like a horse that is touched with the whip, and so kept the whole force at a gallop by 'sounding 'the advance' in its rear.

Colonel Kelly at last stayed the chase, and brought back the '97th detachment' to its former post at the trench.

Defeat of Zavalichine's column.

With his men of the '77th detachment,' supported by that of the 88th, Captain Rickman, after a well-sustained fight, and losing several men, defeated the venturesome column which Zavalichine had led, and drove it back down the Ravine.

From this time—about midnight—until one other

hour had passed, there was peace on the Woronzoff Heights. CHAP. IV.

Sound of firing towards the more western part of the Woronzoff Ridge.

But again at one o'clock in the morning the tumult of more and more fighting began to make itself heard; and the seat of conflict, this time, was a part of the Ridge further west.

Colonel Kelly taking his measures:

With his newly received detachment of the 7th Fusiliers now marching westward by fours along the course of the foremost parallel, Colonel Kelly made what haste he could towards the sound of the firing; but the darkness and the state of the trench—still unfinished and encumbered with stone — made the progress of the troops somewhat slow; and the Colonel himself being able to move at a faster pace pushed forward impatiently in advance of his men. Soon, he met Lieutenant Jordan with some men of the 34th (the Colonel's own regiment), and by him was apprised that the Russians had seemingly entered a part of the trench further west. The Colonel said that our people must try to drive the enemy out, told Jordan to get his men together, informed him that the detachment of 7th Fusiliers was coming up, and then once more hastened on towards the sound of the firing. He had gone but a little way further, when—standing together in the trench—he saw a group of seven or eight soldiers whom he took in the darkness to be men of his own regiment—the 34th. So, going close up to them, he directed these men to 'fall in' with the other men under Jordan. He was

CHAP. IV.

but wounded and taken prisoner.

met by an uproar of outlandish cries, and found that he had been accosting the enemy. He brought out his revolver, and pointing it at the head of his nearest foe, pulled hard, though in vain, at a trigger held fast by the 'safety catch.' Whilst lowering his weapon in order to push back the bolt, he was felled—felled by numbers of blows laid upon him with the butt-ends of muskets, and when on the ground was bayoneted in the right shoulder, in the left hand, and in the right leg, whilst also his assailants—not Russians but Albanian Christians, engaged in the enemy's service—were so emulous in the truculent work of pounding and battering at him with the stocks of their firearms that many of the blows they were levelling intercepted each other, and the victim had not succumbed, nor even indeed lost his consciousness, when a young Russian officer no less generous than brave interposed. Standing over the prostrate Colonel, and so courageously shielding him as himself to become the recipient of some of the fiercely aimed blows, this chivalrous noble at last proved able to make good the rescue, and caused the wounded Colonel — of course as a prisoner of war—to be safely brought into the fortress.*

The misfortune which threw Colonel Kelly into the hands of the enemy was unknown at the time to our troops, and men supposed after a while that 'the 'field officer of the night' had been killed.

* Where by all, let me say, by Prince Gortchakoff, by General Osten-Sacken, by Admiral Pamphiloff, he was treated with the most generous and thoughtful kindness. It was from the table of General Osten-Sacken (the Commandant of Sebastopol) that food was supplied to the wounded officer.

CHAP. IV.

Jordan did not mistake when he said that a part of our foremost parallel was seemingly in the enemy's hands. Moving out from the fortress a body of troops under Astapoff had advanced, and advanced unobserved so far up the right bank of the gorge which carries the Woronzoff Road as to be able to assail by surprise the left flank, to operate advantageously against the left of our foremost parallel. They accordingly—surprising the trench-guards—broke into a part of the parallel lying westward of the Mortar Battery;* and after thus entering the work, pursued the advantage some way along the course of the trench without meeting, so far as is known, any strongly sustained resistance at the hands of troops caught under circumstances which prevented them from showing a front.

The attack under Astapoff.

Able officers, however, were busied in the task of collecting some means with which to repel the invasion. Marsh (the 'Adjutant of the trenches' that night) got together some men. Lieutenant Jordan went on endeavouring to increase the small number of 34th men already brought under his leadership. The detachment of the 7th Fusiliers under Captain Cavendish Browne was coming up in a collected state; and finally, Colonel Tylden of the Royal Engineers (the officer destined to command our people in the approaching combat), got together the men of the working-parties whose

Means of resistance collected.

* Whether they entered (as Todleben thought) at the flank, or (as Lord Raglan supposed) by the left front, or, as seems probable, by the left rear, there are seemingly no means of showing.

CHAP. IV.

labours he before had been guiding, and caused them to stand to their arms.

Fight at the Mortar Battery.

The conflict drew to a head on the site of a new mortar battery which occupied the trench near its centre.

The enemy advanced on this battery from the west, the English from the east, and within it the two forces met, moving each of them with bayonets fixed alongside the parapet, and of course therefore facing the traverses. At the first traverse, the Russians made a protracted stand. Colonel Tylden came up in person, and his own idea seemingly was to execute a charge straight forward from east to west along the foot of the parapet; but our people instead, with a rush, drove their way round the end of the traverse, overthrew at the point of the bayonet all they then found before them, and, pursuing, approached the next traverse, where the enemy made his last stand. Colonel Tylden by yet 'one 'charge more' overcame the resistance there offered, drove the Russians all out of the battery, and pursued them some way along the course of the trench, but the fugitives before very long were all of them over the parapet and making off towards the Redan.

Defeat and flight of the Russian column.

The two English detachments engaged in this part of the field lost three officers and several men.*

Whilst this last combat was raging, yet one other

* Captain the Hon. Cavendish Browne of the 7th Fusiliers and Lieutenant Jordan of the 34th were killed, and Lieutenant McHenry of the 34th Regiment wounded.

CHAP. IV.

sortie began, and was directed against our Left Attack. A column commanded by Béruleff about 500 in number moved out against that foremost trench at the base of Green Hill which was afterwards called the 4th Parallel.* Favoured greatly, as had been other columns, by the darkness of the night and the roaring of the wind, but also by the sound of the fighting then rife on the Woronzoff Ridge, this column surprised and drove in the detachments of the 20th Regiment, which had lined the parapet of the advanced trench, and, driving forward yet further, a great number of the assailants soon entered the two new and incomplete batteries, the 'advanced No. VII.' and the 'advanced No. 'VIII.,' which had been established in our 3d Parallel, there surprising the 'working-parties'—250 in number—which under Captain Montagu of the Royal Engineers were busied in thickening the parapets. The rest of the assailants, if minded to pursue their advantage, were still at the time hanging back in or near to the trench they had carried. In the hope of opposing to these some beginning at least of resistance, Lieutenant Carlton of the 21st Fusiliers—a young officer on guard at the Zigzag uniting the two foremost parallels—collected his own little force—about 50 in number—adding to it some men of the 57th whom he found within reach, and then at once opened fire on the hesitating conquerors of the advanced trench who

Béruleff's surprise of our advanced siege-works in the Left Attack.

Part of the invading force checked by some men of the 21st Fusiliers under Carlton;

* Todleben puts the strength of this column at 475, with *besides* a company of the Okhotsk regiment in reserve.—Vol. ii. p. 76.

CHAP. IV.

were thus, as it seemed, brought to bay. Instead of advancing, they replied to the fire of our people with fire from the ground where they stood. After combating in this way for some time with the small English force which had challenged them, the intruders slackened their fire without seeming inclined to advance. Observing this, Carlton once more collected his men, pushed forward into the trench, and there found the enemy already in the act of deserting it.

and ultimately retreating before it.

Those separated bodies of men which had entered the 'VII.' and 'VIII.' batteries, where our men were at work, took three of them prisoners with also the captain of engineers who was directing their labours. They made themselves at home in the 'advanced No. 'VII.' and the 'advanced No. VIII.' during nearly, it is said, half an hour, doing all the little mischief they could to unfinished sandbag-batteries which had not at that time been armed.

Russian troops for a while in the two advanced batteries;

They also possessed themselves of seventy pick-axes, together with fifty shovels, and the simple Russian soldier—always strangely enjoying the capture of any small chattel—was perhaps somewhat slow to infer that those who had thrown down their tools might be taking up arms—might be on him with what men in general can see through even much darkness—the shining of bayonets fixed.

Yet that was the sequel awaiting him. Captain Chapman of the 20th (but acting that night as an engineer) led forward some men of the working-party

but routed by the men of our working-parties.

who already had stood to their arms against the 500 intruders, overthrew them by a charge with the bayonet, and drove them all out of our siege-works. They left behind them ten of their killed, and two of their wounded men.

In two out of those four sorties which the enemy thus aimed with much skill at his English besiegers, he surprised the guards of the trenches, so that obviously, in the planting of the out-sentries, or in some of the other known tasks by which troops maintain a good watch, there must needs have occurred grave defaults; but against want of vigilance—the usual defect of our people—may be set the rare prowess, the warlike presence of mind, the inborn love of close fighting which sooner or later defeated and turned to rout and confusion every one of these midnight attacks.

Lord Raglan was warm in his praises of the gallantry with which officers and men—men so many of them called from their toil with pickaxe and spade—had met the successive emergencies, and—not confused by the darkness, not putting a weak trust in cartridges—proved able to drive off the masses one after another by simply the use of the bayonet.

To this wise appreciation of feats which, although, it is true, taking place in very small spheres of action, were not the less fraught with good proof of

29907

CHAP. IV.

Comments on the great sortie effected against the French.

the quality of our officers and men, the Queen was pleased to respond in gracious words of approval.*

Still, of course, the great dominant feature of the engagements which the enemy undertook on the night of the 22d of March was his attack delivered in darkness against the French 'approaches' with 5500 men.

Tested simply by what it effected, or avowedly sought to effect, a night attack of this kind might be made to seem almost trivial. What, however, prevented the enterprise from ranging with those petty sorties which I do not undertake to record was the strangely great number of troops that the enemy engaged in his venture, and the carnage his effort involved. Moving out into darkness with several thousands of men, he inflicted, it is true, on the French a loss of 600 in killed, or wounded, and on the English a loss of 70, but then also of his own troops he sacrificed no less than 1300.

General Niel has officially stated that the injuries this strong effort wrought on the works of the besiegers were, after all, insignificant;† and has thence gone on to submit that an enterprise which effected so little at so heavy a cost is a wholesome example

* Lord Raglan's means of informing himself on this subject were impaired by losses of officers; and with the materials before me, I have been prevented from adopting some of his conclusions. His reports are contained in despatches to the Secretary of State of the 24th and 27th March (published), and in a private letter of the 24th to Lord Panmure. The Official Record of the combats by the Royal Engineers is in Part II. of the Journal, p. 94.

† 'Insignifiants.'—Niel, p. 179.

of the error there always must be in attempting any great sortie under cover of darkness.

On the other hand, General Todleben has commented on the very same enterprise in a victorious, satisfied tone, and maintained that the capital object of putting a check on the French approaches at the point they had reached was one of truly great moment which the sortie completely achieved; but then, I see, he goes on to eke out his defence of the measure by referring to its moral effect, and insisting that it not only cheered opportunely the hearts of the Russians, but also wrought such discouragement on the minds of the French as long sufficed to deter them from closing with his darling Lunette.*

It may be that, to check the 'approaches,' though for only a very brief interval, was to gain some great, lasting advantage;† but in the absence of even a statement on which to found such a belief, it is hard to feel sure that for any purpose so small as that of merely upsetting gabions, or doing other like mischief, the enemy would really have brought himself to plunge into outer darkness with the thousands of men he thus hazarded; and perhaps one may fairly surmise that in secret he harboured some greater, some much more ambitious design than the one he avowed—some design of which—since it was frustrated—he did not feel bound to speak. Conjecture points to an enterprise which, if compassed,

* Todleben, vol. ii. pp. 78, 79.

† As, *e.g.*, to gain time until the arrival of expected reinforcements.

CHAP. IV.

and well followed up by the proper ulterior measures might have forced the Allies to give battle—give battle by daylight — under desperately adverse conditions.

IX.

Great extension given by Todleben to his counter-approaches.

Whilst continually strengthening the armament of his three new creations, Colonel Todleben at this time, fore-trenched them by connecting some of the lodgments already protecting each Work; and moreover he added and added to those annexed lines of defence which prolonged right and left the front shown by his now strong Lunette. When the first week of April was ending, he had fastened his counter-approaches on a front (in advance of the Mamelon) which from ground so far east as the bed of the Careenage Ravine stretched far away towards the south-west, and at last crossed the Woronzoff Road.*

As though he were indeed the besieger, and his new trenches so many parallels, he armed them here and there with artillery. If he had not yet barred by an unbroken line of entrenchments the ground lately won on Mount Inkerman, he had covered it nevertheless by the fire of his two White Redoubts; and on the whole one may say that his new outer line of defence extended now from the

* Todleben, ii. p. 80 *et seq.* The gorge which carried the Woronzoff Road was by the Russians called 'the Laboratory Ravine.' Our people used to call the ravine by the name of the road passing through it.

foot of St George's Ravine to the course of the Woronzoff Road. It encircled at all but one place the whole land-front of the Faubourg.

Thus on that newest 'front for attack' of which the Allies had made choice when devising their great change of plan, the terrible Colonel of Sappers was already forestalling, and baffling their studied designs; nay was even indeed so employing the spells of his art that—not the garrison merely but rather—the fortress itself might almost be said to advance against the Frenchmen besieging it.

The design of the 1st of January now so far frustrated as to be almost in abeyance.

The French did not arrest their 'approaches' along the Victoria Ridge (where by this time they touched on their left a new parallel formed by the English), and they still continued their siege-works begun long ago on Mount Inkerman; but in the absence of any resolve to counteract recent checks by seizing the two White Redoubts and the now strong Lunette on the Mamelon, it would be hard to deny that at this time, the great design of the 1st of January had undergone so much frustration as to be nearly in a state of abeyance.

X.

The siege operations maintained against the town front;

Our allies, all this time, both above and below the earth's surface had been pressing their siege operations against the town front of Sebastopol, whilst the English with scantier numbers, and besides on more difficult ground, had been slowly pushing for-

CHAP. IV.

ward their batteries against the Redan and its neighbours; but then also—resorting to means such as those we before saw him use—the unwearied Colonel of Sappers had never for one moment ceased to keep his assailants confronted by so strong a growth of defences, and so eager, so constant a handling of his warlike resources, that, although it cost them great sacrifices, and extended along a front of four miles, this now subordinate part of the general conflict did not rage in a way that seemed tending towards any momentous result.

and by the English against the Redan and its neighbours.

XI.

Continuance and final success of General Canrobert's efforts to draw reinforcements from the Turkish army at Eupatoria.

General Canrobert, as we have seen, had long been desiring, and at last craving almost passionately that a great part of Omar Pasha's force at Eupatoria should be brought to the Chersonese; but Lord Raglan was strongly opposed to the idea. He conceived that Omar Pasha firmly planted at Eupatoria with 40,000 victorious troops on the flank and rear of the enemy was doing excellent service, and besides did not like that the narrow, the cramped seat of war to which the besiegers unfortunately had perforce become chained should be loaded by the additional presence of Turkish troops, whilst moreover he took it for granted that the measure would be displeasing to Omar Pasha. But in proportion to the increasing depth of that gloom which we have seen overcasting the mind of General Canrobert

was his anxiety to secure the proposed reinforcement; and his instances made with this object became more and more constant and more and more urgent. Lord Raglan still resisting, Canrobert approached Omar Pasha himself, and found him willing on certain specified terms to come on in person to the Chersonese with a large portion of his army, and to remain there for a limited time. Lord Raglan did not think fit to oppose the thus conjoined wishes of the French and Turkish commanders; and before the close of the period which this chapter spans, Omar Pasha was brought to the Chersonese with from 15,000 to 18,000 men supported by thirty pieces of field-artillery.*

Arrival of Omar Pasha in person with a large force of Turks.

XII.

It was perceived by the Russians that the men-of-war they had sacrificed after the battle of the Alma in order to close the entrance of the Roadstead were no longer so holding together as to constitute a secure barrier, and towards the end of February they sank six more of their ships.†

Sinking of more Russian ships.

In Sebastopol, the death of the Emperor Nicholas was concealed with much care for some time;‡ but afterwards, there came in a Rescript from the new

Death of Nicholas imparted to the Sebastopol garrison.

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, April 7, 1855.

† Todleben, vol. ii. p. 40. ‡ Ibid., p. 45.

CHAP. IV.

Czar which brought both condolence and greeting to the valiant garrison. With none of the misty grandeur which veils like conceptions in the poems of Ossian, and rather indeed with the air of a flat—though celestial—'Court Circular' describing the movements of princes, the garrison were informed that 'translated to eternal life the supreme chief of 'the orthodox warriors' (that is, the late Emperor Nicholas) 'was blessing from on high their unequalled 'firmness and intrepidity.'*

Change of Russian commanders.

In the command of the Russian forces Prince Mentschikoff was succeeded by Prince Michael Gortchakoff; and General Osten-Sacken was placed at the head of the Sebastopol garrison.

Prince M. Gortchakoff;

Prince Michael Gortchakoff was a man of intellect and ripe cultivation, with some theoretical knowledge of the art of war; but what rendered the choice of this general supremely advantageous to Russia was his early and sustained appreciation of the great volunteer.

what made this a supremely fortunate choice?

The new commander-in-chief being he who had had the good fortune to launch Colonel Todleben on the scene of his glory, might prove able to secure him—against strong and jealous opposers—in his hold of the power he needed for continuing the defence of Sebastopol.

* Ibid., pp. 45, 46. The Russians are a poetic people, and I cannot doubt that in that true Muscovy of which Moscow is the centre, people might have been found who could express a thought of this kind with dignity and genuine enthusiasm; but to get such a task performed worthily by a cold-blooded clerk at St Petersburg was beyond the range of things possible.

CHAP. IV.

On the 17th of March, the Russians lost their valiant Admiral Istomine. A cannon-ball killed him whilst standing by the then new Kamtchatka Lunette.* Admiral Istomine killed.

Before the close of the period embraced by this chapter, our Headquarters lost the assistance of that veteran engineer officer whose counsels, since the day of the Alma, had exerted an unrelaxed sway on the chequered course of events. Pursuant to the early decision of Lord Palmerston's new Administration,† General Harry Jones on reaching the Crimea was at once put in orders as the commander of our military engineers, and Sir John Burgoyne being apprised of the instructions recalling him ceased of course to hold power officially at the seat of war.‡ Lord Raglan, however, believed that at that particular time when the French overmastered by Todleben were submitting to his counter-approaches, the continued aid of Burgoyne would be of great value to the public service,§ and he therefore requested the general to remain for a while at headquarters. This Burgoyne did, and it was only in the third week of March that he left the Crimea.‖ Departure of Sir John Burgoyne.

* Ibid., p. 64.

† *Ante*, vol. vi. p. 320.

‡ Lord Raglan to Lord Panmure—Private Letter—3d March 1855.

§ Lord Raglan of course imparted to his Government the step he thus took.—Ibid.

‖ Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, 19th March 1855.

CHAP. IV.

In the autumn of the previous year Burgoyne not only championed that measure which restored to the enemy's forces their all-precious line of communication, but opposed himself to any prompt seizure of the then almost helpless Sebastopol which Mentschikoff had left to its fate;* and he clung indeed so tenaciously to the idea of proceeding against the place by means of covered batteries that—almost without knowing it—he drew the Allies on and on into the curious error of preferring a siege to a conquest, though better than most men he knew that the siege thus strangely preferred must needs be one undertaken with grossly inadequate means;(7) and of course with the plain facts before me, I have not been able to think that any such counsels were sound.†

But when once the Allies had committed themselves to the task of a siege, and the thus narrowed question asked only how best to conduct it, Burgoyne—then no longer the strategist but—the skilled, the accomplished engineer, brought to bear on his objects a keen, piercing intellect, a bold, hopeful spirit, vast energies always sustained by a manful warlike zeal; and the events of the 17th of October—the day he dealt his first blow—showed plainly enough to all that the veteran when striking struck hard.

* See *ante*, vol. iii. pp. (in 3d edition) 86, 87, 92, 161, 168, 195, 213, 214, 215.

† See *ante*, vol. iii. chaps. ii. iv. vii. viii. ix. x. xi. xii. xiv. xvi. xvii. xviii. and xx.

Owing mainly perhaps to the circumstance of his being styled an 'adviser' instead of holding simple 'command,' he used often to recommend measures without having learnt antecedently the number of troops or workmen that well could be spared for the purpose, and therefore of course the foundations on which any such project rested were 'postulates' rather than facts;(8) but, although for this reason his counsels furnished often much more of suggestion than of actual, present guidance, they still were always enlightening, and at last, as we saw, they won their own way to acceptance by Canrobert and all his generals.

Lord Palmerston's newly formed Government were content with the plan of siege formed on the 1st of January at the instance of Sir John Burgoyne; and one therefore may fairly surmise that, when determining to recall the 'adviser,' they mainly based their resolve upon a disapproval of those 'early counsels' anterior to the siege which I have not attempted to screen from the charge of being pernicious; so that, if my conjecture be sound, the Ministers may be said to have judged him for what he had done much more than for what he was doing. In the absence of that explanation, it would seem in some measure anomalous that they should be determining to withdraw him from the scene of action at a time when they knew that the French had at last accepted his guidance.

The actual withdrawal of Sir John Burgoyne

CHAP. IV.

from the seat of war was—for him at least—more opportune than the order recalling him. From the 24th of February to the time of his departure on the 20th of March, he had been under the torment of seeing the French acquiesce in the counter-approaches, and this too on 'the Inkerman flank' where his very heart seemed to dwell.

Lord Raglan did not suffer Burgoyne to depart without addressing to him a letter expressive of the grateful appreciation with which he regarded his services.

XIII.

Preparations for a great cannonade.

During all the latter part of the period embraced by this chapter, the Allies had been not only busied in arming their batteries with more and heavier guns, but also—and with good help at last from the railway our people had made—in bringing up to their heights such huge loads of ordnance ammunition, and other artillery stores as might serve for a great cannonade.

The bulk of the allied armies had looked forward for weeks and for weeks to the thus prepared effort of heavy ordnance power as a measure that seemed to be big with the long-delayed fate of Sebastopol; but some light newly thrown on the transactions of 1855 has enabled me, if so one may speak, to avert disappointment, and warn inquirers beforehand that, when seeing General Canrobert engaged in the

Allusion to recent disclosures.

promised bombardment, they will see in him—not a real Chief, but rather—a fettered lieutenant without the freedom of action, without the ulterior purpose which alone could give mighty significance to his use of the French breaching guns.* CHAP. IV.

* The nature of the 'light newly thrown' will appear *post*, in chap. v.

CHAPTER V.

THE SECRET TERMS OF THE MISSION ENTRUSTED TO GENERAL NIEL.

CHAP. V.

THOSE who now have sufficiently seen General Canrobert yielding and yielding to the series of affronts put upon him by an audacious garrison, will be in the mood for inquiring whether this long-continued submissiveness was all his own, or might partly be traced to misguidance imposed by the hand of authority.

The French Emperor beginning in secret to interfere with the siege.

The engagements of the 1st of January were still only new, when the Emperor Louis Napoleon began to counterplot them, and—concealing his design from our people—to frame an ill-omened scheme which tended to put in abeyance the enterprise of Canrobert's army, and keep it for nearly three months in what might well seem to observers a faltering, half-hearted state, though its real condition, as now we are able to see, was one of another kind. It was an army—not stricken with palsy from any defect in itself, but—persistently held back by its sovereign in furtherance of a secret design.

CHAP. V.

General Niel.

The Emperor concerted his measures with General Niel, an engineer officer of 'high standing and 'repute' who, though not having yet taken part in the Eastern campaign, had still brought himself to form on the subject some strongly rooted opinions.

His opinions on the subject of the war in the Crimea.

So far as concerned that past era which extended from the victory of the Alma to the opening of trenches against Sebastopol, his opinions were of a kind which—in deference to general accord—may now be treated as sound. He considered that the Allies had gone far astray when they wilfully restored to the enemy his captured line of communication, and—instead of breaking into Sebastopol—resolved to assail it by siege without first investing the place.

Fully granting the errors thus charged against the Allies, it did not of necessity follow that, after all they had done—after giving back to the enemy his strong Mackenzie Heights, and for months at the cost of huge sacrifices going on with the siege—the wisest course they could take was to act, as it were, penitentially, and try to retrace their false steps. Niel, however, entertained no such doubt. He believed that by simple resort to what he considered fit means, Sebastopol might surely be taken, whilst also he firmly maintained that, without resort to those means, it could never be taken at all. In order to carry Sebastopol, the Allies, he declared, must invest it.

This condition involved a resort to some new campaign in the open.

CHAP. V.

The desire of the French Emperor.

Now also, the brooding French Emperor had begun to imagine that a little campaign of this sort might win for him infinite glory with proportionate increase of strength, if he himself—present in person—were to lead the field-army, thus bringing about by swift magic that long-deferred fall of Sebastopol which other mortals as yet had been signally failing to compass.

The 'mission' of General Niel.

The judgment of the engineer officer was therefore found to harmonise well with the desire of the Emperor; and the two men were soon of one mind, nay apparently were so well agreed that the object of General Niel's 'mission' was rather to mature on the spot an already sketched plan of campaign than simply to inquire, and seek light. It was seemingly intended at first that, after maturing the plan, General Niel should return to France, and submit his conclusions to the French Emperor; but after a while, it appeared that, without resort to that step, the understanding between the Emperor and his counsellor had been rendered sufficiently complete by interchanged letters or messages; and, although it is true, General Niel had at one time made all his arrangements for returning to France, and did indeed go to Constantinople (whilst waiting for further instructions), we still may say that substantially, his mission was uninterrupted.*

Niel's position at the French Headquarters.

The position he held at the French Headquarters could not plainly be other than one of a strange and

* This results, I think, clearly from the extracts which M. Rousset gives of Niel's letters, vol. ii. p. 34 *et seq.*

exceptional kind. His ostensible function was that of an 'Aide-de-camp of the Emperor on mission to 'the Army of the East,' with a military position which placed him at the top of the Engineer Staff;* but of course the bare fact of his 'mission' sufficed amply to show that he must be acting in concert with the Emperor, and therefore wielding great power. He did not disguise from himself that the 'mission' entrusted to him was perforce overshadowing Bizot, the commander of the French Engineers, whilst also indeed it is plain that his presence obscured the authority of even the Commander-in-Chief, though to Canrobert—a man not self-seeking, but fevered by doubt and anxiety—the shade which thus overcast him may perhaps, after all, have been welcome. He might naturally enough have been glad to find himself much shorn of power, and proportionately disburdened of care.

His plan.

When advising the arrangements recorded on the 2d of February, General Niel, we now see, was preparing a retreat for the French from their engagements of the 1st of January, and bringing things into conformity with his inchoate plan of campaign then already approaching completion. By the middle of February he had not only brought this new plan to what he thought perfect maturity, but had even proceeded to use it, or rather, I must say, to use part of it† for the enlightenment—or guidance—of Canrobert.

* As shown by 'la situation' of the 15th February.—Niel, p. 476.

† See *post*, p. 120, as to the 'Separate Article' which was withheld from him.

CHAP. V.

The all-governing condition of the new plan was one which required the Allies to reverse, as it were, their 'flank march,' to win and take up a position between the Tchernaya and the Belbec in the neighbourhood of Mackenzie's Farm, to besiege the Star Fort, and in short to make themselves masters on the north of the Roadstead.* The resources Niel judged to be needed for effecting this reconquest of ground both won and abandoned by the armies which made the 'flank march' were stated to be 50,000 men and 6000 horses provisioned for two days with 220 waggons, 1100 draught-horses, and 3500 mules.† By a due use of these resources the investment of Sebastopol was to be completed; and the measure was supported for reasons which, if once accepted by Canrobert, would at once extinguish all chance of his going on with the siege in any such spirit as that which had ruled the Allies on the 1st of January. The authoritative adviser explained that, until completely invested, Sebastopol could not be taken;‡ thus in other words laying it down that, till that undefinable time when a newly imagined campaign might be brought to a fortunate close, any enterprise attempted by storming would be a vain sacrifice

* Line 27 *et seq.* in the Letter from General Niel to the French Emperor, 14th February 1855. (1) Rousset, vol. ii. pp. 33, 34.

† Ibid., line 62 *et seq.* However sound in its main principles, the plan without more explanation than Niel gives is made to seem strangely crude.

‡ Ibid., line 25 *et seq.* In a letter to the Minister of War (quoted by Rousset, vol. ii. p. 34) he says: 'Croyez, Monsieur le Maréchal, 'qu'on ne fera rien sans investir.'

of life. He did not, however, leave this conclusion to inference, but went on in set terms to denounce as too hazardous the idea of any great onslaught attempted by storm against either the Town or the Faubourg.* There was to be an artillery-fire carried on without undue haste under cover of which the 'approaches' might be pushed on so close to the defences as at last to allow of assault by comparatively small numbers of men against either the Flagstaff Bastion or the Malakoff;† but those future assaults were not meant to take place until the investment of Sebastopol should be brought to completion by the newly projected campaign.

After having thus shown what he meant as regards abstention from enterprise, Niel used a compendious adverb. He summed up his conclusions by saying that the right course was this:— 'To go on "prudently" with the siege,' and to cut off 'as soon as possible the communications [of the 'garrison] with the interior of the Crimea.'‡ This plan was one framed in substantial conformity with what Niel rightly understood to be the wish of the French Emperor;§ and so early as the 14th of February, it won the approval of Canrobert;‖ whilst also I gather that from the day (the 23d of

The plan in general conformity with the wish of the French Emperor; and approved by Canrobert.

* Ibid., line 45 *et seq.*

† Ibid., line 49 *et seq.*

‡ Ibid., line 56 *et seq.*

§ Speaking of a time not later than the 3d of February 1855, Rousset says: 'L'Empereur avait en principe adopté les idées de 'son aide de camp.' Vol. ii. p. 35.

‖ Ibid., line 58 *et seq.* It is immediately after his summing up of the plan that Niel adds: 'Le Général Canrobert le juge ainsi.'

CHAP. V.

February *) when Niel returned to the French Headquarters after his very brief visit to Constantinople, he constantly made it his task to keep the siege in conformity with that restrained system of action which his written precepts enjoined.†

Niel's task.

The army of Canrobert kept secretly under restraint.

Thus the first of the two objects indicated by General Niel's summary—that of putting restraint on Canrobert's army—was fully secured; and measures were promptly taken for achieving the other great object—the investment of Sebastopol on its North Side. A part of the plan which—because not imparted to Canrobert—may be called its 'Separate Article' had laid it down from the first that the task of thus completing the investment should be undertaken by the Emperor in person with the aid of fresh troops in large numbers sent out from France or Algeria; and, so early as the 3d of February, Marshal Vaillant, the Minister of War, was already giving his orders for assembling on ground near Constantinople the new forces meant to take part in Louis Napoleon's enterprise.‡

The Emperor's plan put in course of execution.

So, the project of Niel and his Emperor was no longer a mere creature of the brain, but a military plan in full course of execution. The very peculiar task of restraining Canrobert's forces without show-

* Lord Raglan to Lord Panmure, 24th February 1855.

† See the quotations from letters of Niel given by Rousset, vol. ii. p. 34 *et seq*, and especially the one of the 17th of February 1855.

‡ From 40,000 to 60,000 men.—Vaillant to General Larchey, quoted Rousset, vol. ii. p. 35. However, in the middle of April, the French 'Reserve' army collected in the neighbourhood of Constantinople had a strength of only 25,000.

ing them to be under restraint was successfully begun and continued.(2) The business of assembling an army to serve under Louis Napoleon was carried on with alacrity. There of course came a time when the process of collecting this force on the Bosphorus disclosed itself to the world; but the object for which it was destined could still be concealed. And, concealed it was—concealed from our Government, and concealed from Lord Raglan,* but also, strange to say, from General Canrobert himself, the Emperor's half-trusted commander! †

Concealment of the plan from the English;

France and England, remember, were—not merely joined in alliance but—arrayed side by side in the presence of a powerful enemy; and, that under such conditions the French Emperor, and official men under him, could deliberately persist in the notion of hiding away from Lord Raglan the very plan they were executing may seem almost too strange for credence, yet must needs be believed—because true. Our people are not suspicious, and the Emperor's scheme of concealment was crowned with real, lasting success. (3)

and of its 'separate 'article' from Canrobert.

It is true that with what seemed like frankness the Emperor from time to time spoke to Lord Cowley and others of his intention to go out to the Crimea, but those surface disclosures apparently gave actual aid

Impressions caused by the prospect of the Emperor's

* So late as the 3d of April, Lord Raglan wrote:—'What a body 'of French troops is collecting at Constantinople for, I cannot divine.' To Lord Panmure, Private Letter.

† Rousset:—'Le secret sur ce grand envoi de troupes devait être 'absolument gardé. Le général Canrobert lui-même n'en devait rien 'apprendre.' Vol. ii. p. 35.

CHAP. V.

going to the Crimea.

to concealment of the inner purpose by causing the surmises of men to fly off in other directions. Some thought with alarm of what might happen in Paris during the Emperor's absence; and others—with yet more anxiety—of what might take place in the Crimea, if the Emperor should go out and entrust himself with the command of the French army.* General Canrobert was apparently left to hear from private sources or from rumours in camp of the Emperor's intention to visit the Crimea;† and he thought that the step would be a 'very false move.'‡ Lord Raglan considered that, if ever adventured at all, the visit from Louis Napoleon would be a measure fraught with dangers and mischiefs to be looked for in France as well as at the seat of war;§ and his conditional forecast included the embarrassing burthen —the 'great *gêne*,' as he expressively called it—that would be laid upon the Allies before Sebastopol by the Emperor's undesired presence;‖ but he did not allow himself to be made at all anxious on the subject, being sanguine enough to believe, in face of all contrary assurances, that the Emperor would never come out.¶ No one seems to have divined that the Emperor—though a man strangely fond of

* Lord John Russell to Lord Raglan, Private Letter, March 12, 1855.

† Lord Raglan to Lord Panmure, Private Letter, April 3, 1855.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid., and letters to same of 17th, 20th, 27th, and 31st March.

‖ Lord Raglan to Lord Panmure, Private Letter, March 17, 1855. Lord Raglan liked Louis Napoleon personally; and after writing to the effect above stated, he added this:—'Personally I should have no 'difficulty in communicating with him.'

¶ Same to same, April 3, 1855.

effecting theatric surprises, and believed to be intent on the notion of assuming high command at the seat of war—might desire to keep Canrobert's army in a state of restraint, with its fires, as the phrase is, 'banked up' until the time of his own arrival, when troubles unnumbered, and successive disappointments, and the weariness of hope long deferred would be all at once followed by what the play-books call 'flourishes,' by victory, conquest, and triumph. The 'mission' of General Niel was full fraught, as we saw, with this purpose; yet—secrecy being maintained—it did not afford to observers apt means of seeing the truth. Lord Raglan knew that the General—an Engineer officer—had come out with instructions 'to look into the state of the siege';* but, far from appearing disposed to put restraint on Canrobert's army, the new comer spoke as one urgent in the very opposite direction. In conversation with Lord Raglan he professed to maintain that 'a regular approach to the Tower of Malakoff 'would inconveniently defer the attack of the 'place,' and caused his hearer to think he was 'evidently bent on an assault!'†

The concealment from Lord Raglan maintained with continued success.

Lord Raglan would scarce have complained, if frankly informed by Canrobert that the Emperor's new adviser disapproved the engagements of the 1st of January, and wished them to be all reconsidered.

* Lord Raglan to Duke of Newcastle, Private Letter, January 29, 1855.

† Ibid. Niel spoke mysteriously of 'other measures,' and we can now see that he was thinking of the proposed investment, but he conveyed no such idea to Lord Raglan.

CHAP. V.

But no such suggestion was made. With the aid of very recent disclosures we have been able indeed to perceive that by his dispositions of the 1st and 2d of February Niel was preparing—and covering—a retreat from the engagements made with Lord Raglan at the beginning of the previous month; but our allies at the time, gave no indication at all of any such purpose. Both Lord Raglan and Burgoyne were effectually led to believe that the French arrangements of the 1st and 2d of February had been honestly adopted in furtherance—though with varied appliances—of the stipulations made between General Canrobert and General Airey on the opening day of the year.

A day indeed was approaching when Lord Raglan would be openly told that the French commander was hampered by his sovereign's restraining orders; but I am speaking now of the interval from the 27th of January to the third week of April;* and what I say is that from the beginning to the end of that period, all knowledge of the fact that Canrobert had been brought under the restraints imposed by the Emperor's plan was effectually concealed from Lord Raglan.

After the close of the period above indicated the Emperor and his confidential servants still went on

* The 27th of January was the day of Niel's landing. It was on the 16th of April that Canrobert (as recorded in the secret despatch of the 17th) read out to Lord Raglan the passage of a letter from the Emperor which will be found *post*, chap. viii. p. 220; and that, I believe, was the earliest intimation Lord Raglan received of the 'tethering' to which the French army was subject.

concealing the fact of their having been pursuing a plan during several months which they had all the while kept strictly hidden from their English allies; and it was only from disclosures which the fall of the Empire made possible that the unseemly truth came to light.

Greatness of the difference between the plan concerted with Lord Raglan by Canrobert, and the one framed by Niel.

Between the plan concerted with Lord Raglan on the 1st of January, and the one now accepted from Niel by General Canrobert, the difference of course was immense; for this project of invading 'the 'North Side' had had no part at all in the former arrangements; and, so far as concerned all those weeks if not months that must pass before any investment of Sebastopol could be completed, the difference between the old and the new plan of siege was almost as wide as the difference between a sword and a scabbard, or between using force and conserving it; for the engagements of the 1st of January provided that, with no more delay than was needed for perfecting two designed batteries, the French should make themselves masters of the Mamelon, and thence drive on at once by siege-process against the Malakoff Tower;* whereas those new counsels of Niel's and of the Emperor seemed in terms to ordain for the time, strict avoidance of onslaughts with troops on any serious scale, not allowing in the way of aggression any effort of war more adventurous than a steadily maintained cannonade, and slow

* 'Dès que le temps le permettra, on marchera sur la tour Malakof. 'Nous nous chargerons de cette attaque.'—Bizot to Vaillant, 12th January 1855, quoted Rousset, vol. ii. p. 31.

CHAP. V.

advance by 'approaches.'(4) So, whatever might be the hopes based on this newly imagined campaign when—at some later time—driven home against the 'North Side,' and whatever might then be the duties assigned to General Canrobert, it is plain that during the interval, his adoption, or even approval, or even indeed his mere cognisance of the Imperial plan must have tended to throw his whole spirit of warlike enterprise into lifeless abeyance, and render him morally powerless to execute the engagements of the 1st of January with the daring, the firmness required for promptly seizing the Mamelon, and making it his path to the Malakoff.

The all but inevitable consequence of imparting the Emperor's plan to Canrobert.

For, although partly aiming at measures still in the future, the secret counsels aimed also at a change of great moment intended to take effect instantly, and indeed were of such a kind that, when once imparted to Canrobert, they could not but tend to deflect him from the straight path of duty—the path of duty marked out for him by engagements made with Lord Raglan.

This is easily shown. To any thoughtful commander engaged in besieging a fortress it must always of course be distressing to have to ordain an assault which seems likely to cost him the sacrifice of numbers of his most precious troops; and it is only under the cogency of what he deems a great purpose that he steels himself by sheer force of mind for so painful an effort of will; but how doubly hard would he find it to perform the stern duty, if a General skilled in siege business were to come out

express from his Sovereign and assure him with unflinching confidence that (unless the essential preliminary of a thoroughly completed investment should first be made good) all this painfully contemplated sacrifice must, after all, fail in its object—must be therefore a sheer waste of life! And how yet more hard—how impossible—will the effort become, if he himself by the processes of genuine conversion is brought to share the opinions thus authoritatively pressed on his mind by the recognised Chief of the State! CHAP. V.

It is under this aspect that concealment of the pith of Niel's mission from our Government and from Lord Raglan shows the stain of revolting disloyalty. Whilst consulting together in secrecy, the Emperor and General Niel were at liberty to frame a new plan without being bound to disclose it to any ally; but, after having caused General Canrobert to know—nay to share—their conclusion, and prove ready to give it effect, they of course could no longer—with honour—go on maintaining concealment against the English Commander. Disloyalty of the concealment practised against the English.

The Emperor did not yet go the length of addressing to General Canrobert decisive, positive orders which would force him, whether willing or not, to break loose from his engagements of the 1st of January; but proceeding from an unfettered Sovereign whose will in such matters was legally absolute, the expression of a formal opinion, and of a consequent wish, may have naturally appeared all-sufficing; and so it apparently proved. Nor indeed do we see that Way in which the Imperial will was brought to bear on Canrobert.

CHAP. V.

the General deferred to the wish of his Sovereign with any degree of reluctance. On the contrary, we are led to believe that this sudden interposition of Louis Napoleon found an eager—because ready—welcome at the French Headquarters.

No apparent reluctance on the part of Canrobert to be guided by his Emperor's wish.

There, apparently, unless signs mislead us, the authorities after a while had grown to be so little enamoured of the frowning Malakoff that they repented—and not without anger—of having undertaken the task. Forgetting that the English had themselves desired eagerly to undertake the Malakoff instead of the Redan, and had only been prevented from doing so by Canrobert's rejection of their proposal,* the French seem to have thought that, to their own injury, and to the advantage of their English allies, they had been unwittingly drawn into what, on reflection, they judged to be an ugly predicament.† If their chief shared at all in those feelings, he may not have been grievously pained, when his Sovereign (through Niel) interposed, and thus—in a manner—released him from the arduous part of his promise.

Lengthened and baneful incumbency of the Emperor's plan.

The Imperial plan was one destined to reach a much fuller maturity than Niel at first gave it, but still to be ultimately discarded, though not until the end of three months; and there seems to be no room for doubting that its pendency during the interval was baneful enough to account for much of what

* See *ante*, p. 22.

† 'Les difficultés de la position que nous ont faite nos alliés.'—Bizot to Vaillant, 8th February 1855.(5)

perhaps otherwise might be unfairly traced to the weakness of an anxious—too anxious—commander.

Explanations that might be appropriately given by Marshal Canrobert.

Marshal Canrobert is happily living; and although of course—being mortal—he may hardly know what on the whole were his really dominant motives, there would still be much interest in hearing how far, if at all, he believes that his conduct was swayed by the judgment which nature had given him, and how far pursued under stress of those counsels, scarce short of commands, which (along with the opinions of Niel) had imparted the wish of his Sovereign. One might also be told how the Marshal would justify any concealment from Lord Raglan of this newly formed plan which—already in course of execution—was surely, though secretly, altering the whole spirit and tenor of that share of warlike duty which the French had engaged to assume.

The bare facts.

Apart from all question of motive and conscience, the bare facts seem plain. From the time when Niel's 'mission' came into full play, General Canrobert's course of action fell out of all harmony with his enterprising engagements of the 1st of January, and conformed to all the restrictions imposed by the Emperor's plan.

The light thrown by this chapter on Canrobert's successive 'abstentions.'

Thus in knowledge of the Emperor's plan, or rather of its heavy incumbency on the French Headquarters, we have found means that help to account for General Canrobert's tolerance of all the counter-approaches, and the same light will usefully fall on those other 'abstentions' of his to which we shall presently come.

CHAPTER VI.

THE APRIL BOMBARDMENT.

I.

CHAP. VI.

In determining (against the counsel of Niel) to undertake the bombardment now planned for the 9th of April, General Canrobert's object apparently was to meet the requirement insisting that 'something 'ought to be done,' and besides, to indulge a wild hope that, though not followed up by assault, the mere artillery effort might produce some stupendous result; but—if keeping the Emperor's counsel—he could not, of course, turn his troops—the splendid legions of France—into thousands of fellow-conspirators entrusted—by a whisper—with knowledge of Louis Napoleon's secret; and accordingly, although preordained by the inexorable stress of the 'Mission,' to be always striking in vain, we shall not the less see them acting as people busied in earnest, and disclosing a strength in rude contrast with the hollowness of their commander's design.

Expectations formed

General Canrobert and General Niel knew their own concealed purpose too well to be capable of

CHAP. VI.

dreaming, like others, that the bombardment about to begin would be followed up by the French with any decisive attacks; but—effectually kept out of such secrets—the Allied armies generally, as also indeed their antagonists within the lines of Sebastopol, were agreed in believing that, whether for good, or whether for evil, this vast and long promised exertion of artillery-power must be pregnant with desperate fights resulting in some mighty change; and even Lord Raglan himself—a known enemy of overcharged language—did not differ at heart from the officer who spoke of the business in hand as being 'a grave affair.'(1)

by those who were uninitiated in the secret of Niel's mission.

When, however, Lord Raglan thus judged, he had not discovered the secret which Time has now rudely laid open, and therefore took it for granted that the merely preparative blow then about to be struck by artillery was as matter of course to be followed by those ulterior measures which alone could make it conduce to the ruin and fall of Sebastopol.

So believing, he lived, we now see, under what was not other or less than a practised deception; for of course the genuine use of this long-designed cannonade was to open a way for assaults; and the last brief chapter has taught us that from enterprises of that pithy kind the French Army would be firmly held back by the leading-strings of General Niel's 'mission.'

The conditions, moreover, were such that no imaginable attempt to carry the Fortress could be

CHAP. VI.

made by our people alone; so that, to forbid an assault by the French was substantially raising a bar against any assault at all; and on the whole, with our newly gained knowledge of the Imperial devices which thus clogged and hampered the action of both the besieging armies, we see, and see in good time (so as thus to escape disappointment) that—because never meant by the Emperor to be firmly spelt out to the end—this merely penultimate measure of a great cannonade will achieve no decisive results. We shall have to observe the performance; but the narrative of its progress and sequel will rather complete our knowledge of General Niel's 'mission' than bring us perceptibly nearer to any momentous crisis.

II.

Preparation for the April cannonade.

In preparing, however, to execute this long-designed cannonade the Allies had expended great efforts, undertaking to deliver their fire with 501 pieces of ordnance which (except thirty-seven of them) were all of great calibre;* and for the service of all this artillery, they had accumulated a vast supply of ammunition. Of the 501 pieces only 123 were English, the rest being, all of them, French;† but, in aggregate weight of metal, the

* Niel, pp. 187-190. Table printed in Journal of the Royal Artillery, or rather in its Appendix, p. 205.

† I believe that on the *first* day the English opened with only 101 guns.

difference was less; for computed in that way the proportion of the French siege-train power to that of the English was only as sixteen to thirteen.*

Counter-preparations by the Russians.

Of the 998 guns which by this time they had established in battery the Russians could bring into action against the now threatened attack as many as 466 pieces of ordnance, with an aggregate weight of metal which, compared with that of their adversaries, was as twenty-three to twenty-nine.† In that one respect, therefore, we see that the conflict would open on terms not far removed from equality; but by other and weighty conditions the scale was decisively turned.

Conditions placing the Russians at a disadvantage.

First, with only some small exceptions,‡ the batteries of the Allies were on Heights overlooking the Fortress.

Next, the zone of ground reached by their missiles included, besides the defences, much more that was hardly less precious—included bodies of troops, included barracks and streets, included the vast buildings used for warlike stores, warlike factories, and all the treasures unnumbered that constitute a fortress and arsenal; so that any projectile, though

* The weight of projectiles thrown by the French pieces of ordnance in one salvo was . . . . . 15,957 lb.
By the English . . . . . 13,333 „
Conjoined salvo . . . 29,290 „
—Todleben, vol. ii. p. 164. With respect to the 'effectively batter-'ing-power' at the command of our people, see *post*, p. 138.

† The weight of the single Russian salvo being 23,102 lb., and that of the Allies 29,290.—Todleben, vol. ii. p. 165.

‡ The little advanced batteries No. VII. and No. VIII. in the 3d Parallel of our Left Attack were both of them on low ground.

CHAP. VI.

sparing the outer line of the ramparts, might still go on driving its way through flesh and blood, through those all-precious works of men's hands which contributed, each in its way, to maintain the defence of Sebastopol.

Next again, the besiegers enjoyed that blissful prerogative which the nature of things—almost cruelly—has bestowed on him who attacks as compared with him who defends; since of course for those conflicts with infantry on which all (except only a secret knot of French counter-plotters) supposed them to be firmly resolved, they could choose their own time, could choose their own place, and were not under any such exigency as would oblige them to keep under fire collected masses of soldiery; whilst he who defended Sebastopol, without knowing when or where his immense line of Works might be stormed, was on the contrary forced—a hard and distressing trial of warlike resolve!—was forced to keep many and powerful bodies of men on ground close to his front, where hour by hour and day after day they had to stand ready, yet passive under the enemy's fire.

Yet again, it so happened that during the earlier days of this April bombardment, the garrison, which always before had been richly abounding in munitions of war, and indeed ever ready to squander them, was now so far straitened for gunpowder as to be obliged to economise its fire with a stringency which was distressing, and even fraught with grave danger.

On the whole, it beforehand seemed plain that in this artillery conflict the balance of advantage leant strongly against the besieged.

III.

Opening and continuation of the April bombardment.

On Monday the 9th of April, the morning opened so dimly with heavy mist, storm, and rain, that each object on which the Allies had been minded to drive their projectiles was thickly obscured, but not the less, soon after daylight they began their designed cannonade; and the piety of Sebastopol gave them a little time of immunity from hostile shot and shell; for the sacred festivities and greetings commenced on the previous day—the Easter Sunday of the Greek Church—were still—on the Easter Monday—so strangely engrossing as to cause a good deal of delay, and in almost every bastion some twenty or twenty-five minutes were suffered to pass before their batteries opened. At the end of that time, the garrison began to make answer, but still—for the reason we gave—to fire with a rigid economy of warlike munitions; and this very unequal interchange of artillery missiles had not gone on many hours, when already, as may well be supposed, the richly supplied besiegers were seen to be having the mastery.

All day, the besiegers went on with their great cannonade, and, even when darkness came, they did not relapse into silence, but plied the defences at night with a powerful vertical fire.

CHAP. VI.

Continuance and general effect of the bombardment;

On the 10th, and on all the days following, until the close of the 18th of April, they—less rapidly and with long intermissions—continued to work their guns, and to work them with destructive effect; but then always at night-time, though still more or less under fire, the enemy laboured indomitably, never failing before morning dawned, to repair his broken defences and restore his artillery-power. Still, although the gains made good by day were thus subject to resumption at night (since not clenched in good time by assault), it is nevertheless strictly true (this will afterwards be shown more particularly) that, so far as concerned the great duel of guns against guns when regarded as a conflict apart, the besiegers prevailed in the west against the lines of Sebastopol, and prevailed besides in the east against the main counter-approaches protecting its Karabel Faubourg; for (with some little help from our people) French siege-guns broke down the most precious, the most fondly cherished defences of what was called the 'Town front'; and again in the opposite quarter, put to silence the two 'White 'Redoubts' that had fastened themselves on Mount Inkerman; whilst (with aid from Canrobert's ordnance) our English artillery mastered the interposed batteries of that Kamtchatka Lunette which had blocked all approach to the Malakoff.

over both the Town front, and the eastern part of the Faubourg;

With the light that has tardily fallen on the contrivance of the French Emperor, and the two or three agents who served him, it is galling to have to speak of these siege-work achievements, since we

now can no longer be ignorant that—foredoomed to sheer barrenness by the spell of General Niel's 'mission'—they involved exertions and losses which (so far as concerned any purpose directly, honestly warlike) were deliberately meant to prove bootless; and this cold-blooded sacrificing of troops for a sovereign's personal object was more especially cruel to Canrobert's forces, because their siege-work was vast, and—against the Town front—so close-pressed as to be engaging them night after night in struggles costly to life.* Excepting Canrobert and Niel, and the very, very few men, if any, to whom their secret was trusted, the gallant French troops did not know but what they were real besiegers—besiegers commissioned in earnest to toil and to fight, and if need be, to die in the effort to carry Sebastopol; yet, as now we have learnt, they were, all the while, rather what courtiers might call an 'Army in waiting.'

Still, it must not be put out of sight that, although—because not followed up—the advantage obtained ran to waste, the siege-trains, French and English together, did nevertheless achieve the essential part of their task. They prevailed towards the east, they prevailed towards the west, and in each of the two distant quarters, laid open a path for assault.

But not over the intermedi-

They, however, obtained no such mastery over those intermediate defences which extended inclusively

* Treated as distinct from the 'April Bombardment,' those struggles will be recorded in another chapter.

CHAP. VI.

ate batteries directly confronted by the English.

from the 'Garden' Batteries on the skirts of the Town to the great Redan in its Faubourg; and, since those were, all of them, works which our people directly confronted, it was impossible to avoid sharp comparison between what was done by the French, and what by the English artillery.

IV.

What kept within limits the battering-power of the English.

The extent of real battering-power at the command of our people was far from being commensurate with the number and weight of the ordnance they brought into play; for their means of compassing havoc were always kept within limits by the nature of the ground in their front, and by want of the 'hands' they required for more instant, more closely pressed trench-work; but also, to judge from the frequency of recorded complaints, they were too often checked by the way in which our system applied itself to the ordinary toils of a siege.

Our system did not invest any officers under Lord Raglan with that comprehensive authority which—applied to the tasks of the siege — might have brought the Engineers, the Artillery, and, with these, the infantry 'working-parties' to act as trained fellow-servants obeying in their several ways the same all-propelling director; and from want of such governance, there often occurred a great slackness, if not indeed actual default in the rendering of that needed help which men in one 'branch,' as we call

it, were forced to be daily requiring from some other 'branch of the service';* whilst also there sometimes appeared an only too plain want of concert in matters where concert was needful.†

Incompleteness of some of the English preparatives.

It was natural enough that a system which failed in this way to co-ordinate the forces required for siege-business should cause our people to furnish a sample of English 'unreadiness'; and Official Narrative tells us that on the eve of this 'April bom-'bardment,' General Dacres preferred a request—one not however conceded—that, in order to enable him to complete his arrangements, the opening of the fire might be postponed for forty-eight hours.‡

The Left Attack.

What caused General Dacres to ask for delay was the backwardness of certain preparatives in the realms of our Left Attack.

There, the state of the siege-works was this:—

In the 1st Parallel, there ranged a line of powerful batteries all ready for action, but at a distance of 1340 yards from the Great Redan, the nearest of the enemy's Works. In front of this array, there stretched the 2d Parallel, then unfurnished with any siege-battery.§ Beyond it, however, in the 3d Parallel,

* See the Journal of the Royal Engineers. It teems with complaints against the infantry summoned to aid in the siege-works, sometimes denouncing the officers, and sometimes denouncing the men.

† As *e.g.* in the omission to countermand the order for Oldershaw's fight in the advanced No. VII. when the endeavours to arm the sister battery had failed, see *post*, p. 150.

‡ Journal of the Royal Engineers, vol. ii. p. 145. Lord Raglan would not listen to the proposal.—Ibid.

§ It was only in later days that they constructed other batteries in the 2d Parallel.

CHAP. VI.

and on ground so far in advance as to be only some 700 yards from the nearest of the enemy's Works, two batteries had been long since begun; and at the opening of the April bombardment, the task of constructing them had nearly been brought to a close. They had not, however, been armed; and it was from his anxiety to attain that last object before the opening of the bombardment that Dacres had asked—though in vain—for a little extension of time.

So, in point of siege-guns prepared to open immediate fire, the spectacle presented by our Left Attack at the opening of the bombardment was a single array of batteries looking down on the New Sebastopol created by Todleben's genius from a distance as great as at first in the old autumn days of the siege.

This spectacle caused irritation on the part of our people, and it turned out that what had prevented the two advanced batteries from being brought into action was the difficulty of arming them. The task of taking siege-guns over more than a half-mile of ground sloping down towards the enemy was one that could be only attempted under cover of night; but the darkness sought as a screen proved at times so intense as to become an insurmountable obstacle, and torrents of rain brought the ground to a state which baffled the power of even large bodies of men applying their strength to the drag-ropes;* whilst

The arming of its two advanced batteries delayed.

* That these difficulties were very formidable is shown (at least as to one night) by the fact that they baffled so able, so determined a

also in the interposed parapet of the 2d Parallel there existed a physical barrier which would have to be eluded or conquered before any guns could be lodged in the advanced batteries. Some advised the course afterwards followed; but the idea at Head-quarters was that the guns—they were 32-pounders—might each, one after the other, be forced up and over this obstacle by using the machine called a 'gin.'

But, even to reach the foot of the interposed parapet was not for some time found practicable. On the night of the 8th, on the night of the 9th, and again on the night of the 10th, the stubbornness of physical obstacles defeated the efforts of all who successively tried hard to conquer them; and accordingly, all day on the 9th, all day on the 10th, all day on the 11th, the Left Attack was still seen to be having no siege-guns in action except those which plied their fire from the line of the good old 1st Parallel.

The angry impatience thus caused.

There resulted, as may well be supposed, a great deal of angry impatience; and this, it would seem, was most felt by the Royal Artillery, since theirs was the branch of our service entrusted with the arming of batteries. By Artillery officers chafing at all the protracted delay there seems to have been formed at this time an extremely high standard of duty for judging what ought to be done when at

man as Captain—now Lieutenant-General—Henry. With respect to his services and Lord Raglan's warm appreciation of them, see *post*, sec. viii.

CHAP. VI.

Its apparent effect.

last the two advanced batteries should be armed and ready for fighting. As expressed in the language of friendly intercourse not aiming at rigid exactness, men plainly enounced the opinion that, when once in action, these batteries 'should not be silenced, 'whatever the odds against them.'* Those speakers might think they were exercising their faculties of military judgment; yet in truth, they were rather expressing the genuine old fighting sentiment that bases itself on just pride — on the personal pride of the man, on the aggregate pride of the corps. Hence seemingly sprang the instruction for the fight of the 13th of April, to which we shall presently come.

A coincidence.

The officer destined soon afterwards to execute that grave instruction was the one, as it chanced, now directed to try to conquer the obstacles which had hitherto baffled all efforts.

Before evening on the 11th of April, the ground had become much more firm than it was on the days last preceding; and when our Left siege-train commander directed Captain Oldershaw of the Royal Artillery to take down the 'guns meant for the 'arming of the advanced No. VII.,' and lodge 'them, 'that night, in the battery,' he was answered by a cheerful 'All right, sir,' that had the ring of decisiveness.†

Order given to Captain Oldershaw;

* I give what I believe to have been the purport of interchanged words, and do not undertake to supplement them by attempting to show what the speakers may have really desired to inculcate.

† With respect to the number of guns sent down, see Appendix, Note (Y).

CHAP. VI.

With the aid of 300 infantry men whose services he obtained for the purpose Captain Oldershaw opened a road through the parapet of the 2d Parallel, brought his guns through the passway thus won, and before morning, lodged them all safely in the 'advanced No. VII.'

and executed the same night.

On the morrow of the night in which he rendered this service, Captain Oldershaw was on duty elsewhere; but that day—I speak of the 12th—our Engineers executed some completing work in the 'advanced No. VII.,' and supplied it with mantlets. In the course of the same afternoon, four out of the five guns brought down were put in battery;* and with these, some two hours before sunset, our artillerymen opened fire on the enemy's Works, drawing fire in return from the garrison; but it does not appear that the engagement thus begun at a somewhat late hour proved gravely destructive, that day, to either our small 'advanced battery,' or the enemy's opposing defences. †

12th April. The advanced No. VII. completed, and its guns before sunset engaged with the enemy.

With a view to the morrow, however, this beginning of a fight did some harm. It withdrew from our 'advanced No. VII.' the shelter of that blank indifference with which the enemy's gunners were wont to treat every dumb battery, and invited them to perfect their 'ranges.' Moreover, though by what exact means no one seems

* One of the five guns was disabled, it seems, by a shot striking its muzzle whilst still on its 'travelling-carriage.'

† I have not been able to learn who commanded in the battery that day.

CHAP. VI.

to have learnt, it caused the new mantlets to vanish.*

Decision said to have been based on observation of this encounter.

An official narrator has stated that our gunners on the 12th of April were very soon ordered to cease firing, and this for the reason that—unsupported—the battery could be of no service;† but, if any such judgment then held the ascendant, it was—not merely changed, but—reversed.

V.

The two advanced batteries of our Left Attack.

The advanced No. VII. of our Left Attack was the battery destined to be fought on the 13th of April by Captain Oldershaw, and on the 14th by Captain Henry. It was one of two batteries rooted in the 3d Parallel of our Left Attack, and was not only in a position of great comparative proximity to the enemy's frowning defences, but moreover so very low down as to be commanded from most of the ramparts which it seemed to be audaciously challenging.‡

The 'advanced 'No. VII.'

To say nothing of the nests of riflemen ensconced in its front, the Work was so circumstanced as to be looking up into an arc that bristled along its whole bend with well-covered, well-planted artillery.§ Of course, it was certain enough that this vast arc

* They apparently were either 'shot away' by the enemy's guns or 'blown away' by our own.—Journal Royal Engineers, vol. ii. p. 135.

† Journal of the Royal Artillery, p. 80.

‡ From *all* of them, I believe, except the 'Péressip' or 'Creek battery.'

§ See the Plan.

Sketch of
CAPTAIN OLDERSHAW'S FIGHT
in the "Advanced No. 7"
on the
The Redan 13th of April.
"The Advanced No. 7," having been received in the night, was fought again the next day (the 14th) under Captain Henry; and on that day also, "the Advanced No. 8," having as yet been found, was fought under Captain Walker.
Barrack Battery
Flagstaff Bastion
Picquet House
The Crow's Nest
Right Attack
No 8
No 7
Distinguished as
The Advanced N° 7
English Left Attack
Scale

of ordnance array would exert its main strength against other and greater 'objectives'; but it is not the less true that the little 'advanced No. 'VII.' was placed so forlornly as to be openly inviting a fire of almost indefinite power. Thus, if (say on the 13th of April) the garrison by chance should be minded to crush the then lonely assailant presuming to approach them so closely, they could pour, and pour down on their victim the fire of a hundred guns—guns all of fortress dimensions, and some of them of the greatest calibre then used in even sea warfare.*

The enemy's accustomed way of dealing with an advanced battery.

The enemy had his own settled way of treating these advanced batteries. With other huge tasks on his hands, he did not turn aside lightly, to bend his giant power on a weak, unoffending adversary; and, so long as any small 'advanced battery' was suffered to remain strictly silent, he in general, did not molest it. If—unmasking its guns—the small battery opened against him, he took care to answer the challenge with a fire immensely superior, yet still hardly such as could aptly be called 'overwhelming.' But, if the advanced battery should do signal harm to his Works or their armament, then the enemy's policy, reinforced by hot anger, impelled him to ruin, to crush the offender by an unsparing use of his power.

The distance of the advanced No. VII. from the

* If trying to deal more exactly with the number of guns that could be used against our 'advanced No. VII.,' one might reckon them at 113.

CHAP. VI.

'Crow's Nest' (the nearest of the enemy's guns) was only about 700 yards.

The battery, when brought into action on the morning of the 13th, would have to fight all alone in the 3d Parallel;* and moreover have to fight without any artillery support from our 2d Parallel in its rear, because there, at the time, no guns at all had been planted.†

The nearest artillery support that this 'advanced 'No. VII.' could receive from the rear was that which might be afforded by our Green Hill batteries in the 1st Parallel, and these were far off. The nearest of them was more than half a mile in rear of the 'advanced No. VII.'‡

How under conditions so adverse, our siege-conductors persuaded themselves that this little 'advanced 'No. VII.' should singly adventure a fight beneath the guns of the Fortress, I cannot at all fully say; but it seems that one of their objects was to try to gain better security for the men and guns in our distant 1st Parallel by causing its assailants to be themselves assailed at close quarters;§ and on the other hand, they trusted much to a theory that our artillerymen thus thrown out in front to tempt the wrath of Sebastopol might be effectively sup-

* Because, though constructed, the sister battery (No. VIII.) had not then been armed. This I say with full knowledge, though in the teeth of the official R.A. Journal, p. 83. There were two field-guns (9-pounders used against riflemen) in the 3d Parallel, but they formed of course no exception to the above statement.

† It was afterwards that the batteries 9 and 10 were established in the 2d Parallel.

‡ 966 yards. § Journal Royal Engineers, vol. ii. p. 147

ported by the fire passing over their heads from our batteries on the top of Green Hill, if not also indeed by some guns on the left flank of Gordon's Attack. Still our Engineers did not conceal from themselves that the fight of the 13th under Oldershaw was to be an experiment.*

This 'No. VII. battery' had a small 'return' at each flank, and within the two angles thus formed, good, sound magazines had been built; but elsewhere, the Work was on a straight line.

Composed almost entirely of sand-bags, its parapet, with a height of some 8, had a width of about 18 feet;† but nevertheless was not strong enough on the day of Oldershaw's fight to absorb the whole force of such missiles as might well be directed against it by an enemy rich in ship's guns; and, before seeing how men once fought under this almost treacherous shelter against the mightiest ordnance, one ought to have some idea of the ways of a cannon-ball when obstructed without being stopped.

Great, yet insufficient strength of its parapet.

Whether taking its flight through the air, or encountering more solid obstacles, a round-shot of course must be always obeying strict, natural laws, and must work out the intricate reckoning enjoined by conflict of power with absolute, servile exactness; but between the 'composition of forces' maintained

The ways of a cannon-ball when obstructed, without being stopped.

* See *post*, p. 153, the words of Sir Gerald Graham.

† Our Engineers reckoned its width in some places at so much as 22 feet or more.

CHAP. VI.

in our physical world and the fixed resolve of a mind made up under warring motives there is always analogy, with even sometimes strange resemblance ;* and to untutored hearers a formula set down in algebra would convey less idea of the path of a hindered, though not vanquished cannon-ball than would the simple speech of a savage who, after tracing its course (as only savages can), has called it a demon let loose. For not only does it seem to be armed with a mighty will, but somehow to govern its action with ever-ready intelligence, and even to have a 'policy.' The demon is cruel and firm ; not blindly, not stupidly obstinate. He is not a straightforward enemy. Against things that are hard and directly confronting him he indeed frankly tries his strength, and does his utmost to shatter them, and send them in splinters and fragments to widen the havoc he brings ; but with obstacles that are smooth and face him obliquely he always compounds, being ready on even slight challenge to come, as men say, to 'fair terms' by varying his line of advance, and even if need be, resorting to crooked, to sinuous paths. By dint of simple friction with metal, with earth, with even the soft, yielding air, he adds varied rotatory movements to those first enjoined by his mission ; he improves his fell skill as he goes ; he acquires a strange nimbleness, can do more than simply strike, can wrench,

* I once saw an instance in which 'composition of forces'—forces simply mechanical—was so completely mistaken for heroic resolve that it excited a lively enthusiasm.(3)

can lift, can toss, can almost grasp; can gather from each conquered hindrance a new and baneful power; can be rushing for instance straight on in a horizontal direction, and then—because of some contact—spring up all at once like a tiger intent on the throat of a camel.(4)

So far, one may say, his devices are not unfamiliar to men versed in war, and some of his changes indeed, as for instance, his flight by ricochet, they can dictate at their own will and pleasure; but under special conditions, he sometimes will toil in a way that is much less commonly known. When encountering things that are tough (such as gabions or sand-bags well filled) which do much towards obstructing his course, yet have not the required strength of numbers with which to withstand and defeat him, he plays the conqueror over them, he presses them into his service, he compels them to forget their inertness, compels them to fight on his side, and sends them hurled this way and that against all they can reach with their blows.

To know how one round-shot disports itself when able to tear through a sand-bag parapet is to have some help towards imagining the condition of a battery where ruthless intruders like this from time to time come driving in at the rate of some ten in the minute.

Our advanced No. VIII. was the battery destined

CHAP. VI.

to be fought on the 14th by Captain Walcott, having Lieutenant Torriano as his subaltern; but at the time of Oldershaw's fight on the 13th, it had not been armed.

The 'advanced 'No. 'VIII.'

VI.

The order directing Captain Oldershaw to engage the 'advanced 'No. VII. 'battery' on the 13th of April.

On the evening of the 12th, Captain Oldfield (the officer commanding the artillery of the Left Attack) ordered Captain Oldershaw to work the No. VII. advanced battery on the morrow. He peremptorily forbade the opening of fire until mantlets (if not there already) should be supplied by the Engineers, and then he added an order which under the existing conditions was one of a very grave kind. He was an able, a gallant officer;* and perhaps did not mean to do more than make his instruction conform to what, as we saw, had become a ruling idea; but, be that as it may, he unflinchingly enjoined Captain Oldershaw 'to work the battery to 'extremity.'

As on the former occasion, when only directed to go and try to overcome teasing obstacles, so now, charged with desperate service, Captain Oldershaw answered once more with the same ready, cheerful 'All right, sir.'

Captain Oldershaw;

Of rather small stature, compact, fearless, quietly resolute, an accomplished artillery officer endowed with powerful energies, Captain Oldershaw was a

* He (Captain Oldfield) was killed not long afterwards before Sebastopol.

man always bent upon carrying his warlike zeal to the extreme of devotion, yet so persistently firm in abstaining from self-celebration that (as sometimes occurs in such cases) the people around him in camp proved all the more ready to see his genuine worth;* and—whether governed by whim, or by inference from close observation—there were numbers of our gunners who persistently thought that the 'Zouave' —for so, amongst themselves, they used to like calling their favourite—was a man they would gladly have over them in any hard-fighting battery.(5)

Considering not only the confidence he was known to inspire in men under him, but also what he had done on the night of the 11th towards arming this very same battery, one might be easily led to imagine that he was singled out personally, on account of his well-known qualities, for the obviously adventurous service of once more attempting an enterprise which only a few hours before had been abandoned as hopeless; but Captain Oldershaw himself did not know that the selection had been made on such grounds. It was only, he thought, in conformity with what is called 'turn of duty' that both he and the force he commanded were assigned to the work they went through on the 13th of April.†

Yet if so, how superb must have been that old 'Regiment' of the Royal Artillery from which a

* A characteristic instance—and proof—of the 'abstinence from 'self-celebration' will be seen *post*, p. 170.

† I have reason to doubt whether Oldershaw's belief on this subject was the right one, and to conjecture that both he and his men were specially selected for the work set before them.

CHAP. VI.

blind choice by the 'roster' could 'tell off' the man and the men for fighting a little lone battery in the way we are going to see!

entering the battery;

Long enough before sunrise to be under cover of darkness, Captain Oldershaw moved down into the Work, having with him one subaltern (Lieutenant W. R. Simpson*), one surgeon, and as many as sixty-five gunners.

its state.

Captain Oldershaw found time to visit the No. VIII. battery, and discovered what we have seen to be the fact, that no guns had there been mounted. Without any support of the kind that that battery, if armed, might have given him, he saw that his own 'No. VII.' would have to fight out its own fight.

There, four guns stood planted in battery, and a fifth one was near them, but lying on its 'travelling-carriage.'† It was with the four guns already established in battery that Oldershaw undertook to fight.

The effort about to be made was regarded by the scientific conductors of the siege as a bold, if useful, experiment; and therefore it was that an able young officer of our Engineer force (now a far-famed victorious commander), went down to the 3d Parallel on the morning of the 13th, and there—first from a part of the trench close adjacent to Oldershaw's battery, and afterwards, until wounded, from within the battery

Sir Gerald Graham.

* Now Major-General Simpson.

† So left, it was presumed (see footnote *ante*, p. 143), because out of order. Captain Oldershaw caused it to be moved to the most sheltered part of the battery.

itself—observed the course of the fight.* For means of showing what was confronted by our four 32-pounder guns, I gladly resort to his words. Sir Gerald Graham thus writes to me :—'On the 13th of April, I was the Engineer officer on duty on the Left Attack, and I took a strong interest in the artillery conflict about to commence. It was our first attempt at taking up an advanced position for our artillery, and I knew well that we were greatly overmatched by the enemy's guns in number, weight, and position. Before us, we had the Barrack and Creek batteries; to our right, the Great Redan; and to our left, the Flagstaff and Garden batteries.† The latter were perhaps the most formidable, being armed with guns equal to our 68-pounders, and having a considerable command over our advanced battery, of which, as events showed, they—the enemy—knew the range very accurately.

His account of what the battery confronted.

'To the best of my recollection, owing to difficulties in transporting the guns across the trenches by night, only four guns were ready to open fire in No. VII. battery on that morning under Oldershaw and Simpson of the Royal Artillery. I placed myself on the right of the battery in the advanced trench' [*i.e.*, the trench of the 3d Parallel] 'so as to note the effects of our fire, and if possible,

* At the time, a lieutenant, now General Sir Gerald Graham, R.E., V.C., K.C.B., renowned for his victories in the Eastern Soudan.

† There being two tiers of these, and of widely different altitudes (one firing over the other), they were distinguished as the 'Upper Garden' and the 'Lower Garden' batteries. It was to those last that the 'Crow's Nest' battery belonged.

CHAP. VI. 'to assist the artillery officers in getting their 'range.'*

Morning came without yet rousing fire from either the Allies or the Russians; and, so far as concerned his own battery, Captain Oldershaw was not at liberty to break the general silence; for, as we saw, he had been peremptorily instructed that he must not let his men open fire without having mantlets before them to guard against the enemy's rifle-balls, and no mantlets were found in the battery.†

The fight. Captain Oldershaw and his men, as seems natural, were chafing at the painful restraint which thus kept their battery silent, when from the (proper) left face of the Flagstaff Bastion, a 68-pounder shot came tearing in through the parapet, struck the sergeant (who was speaking at the moment to his captain), and tossed him up high into the air; whilst also by the blow it had dealt them when forcing itself through the barrier, there were some of the sand-bags so driven that they came charging, knocking, and banging against all that stood in their way. By sand-bags thus hurled, the captain with two of his men was roughly thrust, knocked, and sent lifted over a pile of shot. Discovering—almost with sur-

* Letter to me, August 19, 1883.

† They had been duly placed in the battery by our Engineers on the 12th (Journal, vol. ii. p. 135), but were afterwards destroyed.

prise—that, despite all the blows heaped upon him, he was not a disabled man, the captain hastened back to where the mangled—nay separated!—remains of the poor shattered sergeant were lying. The sufferer was still able to see, and even to speak. He saw the tempting hilt of a pistol in Oldershaw's breast-pocket, and asked his captain to shoot him. This of course was a favour that Oldershaw could not grant. He could only tell the poor sergeant (with all tenderness, yet still in words giving firm guidance, if not indeed even command) that—good soldier to the last—he 'must 'die properly.' *

Of course, all understood without words that the 68-pounder shot thus crashing into their battery was a challenge that released them at once from the order not to fire without mantlets; and, the gunners that Oldershaw saw now awaiting his orders were men angry indeed, yet rejoicing in the sudden escape from delay, men devoutly intent on a purpose, men elate with the sense of having vengeance—swift vengeance—in their own, in their very own hands, men hardly moving their lips except for some such brief utterance as, 'Now then we'll give it 'em,' but looking intently to their chief for the pregnant monosyllable, 'Load!' and almost anticipating his word of command by hastening to strip off their coats, and—with something of truculent carefulness—rolling up, every man, his shirt-sleeves, to bare the arms for hard work.

* He died a few minutes afterwards.

CHAP. VI.

The embrasures stript of their mantlets, and not yet wrapped in dense clouds of smoke, invited the enemy's sharpshooters; and at first, during interval moments, the malicious 'ping-ping' of the rifle-balls too often carrying death was from time to time catching the ear; but soon, this sharp twang either ceased, or else was drowned, turned into nothingness by the masterful roar of great guns. It was well, I believe, on the whole that the mantlets had all disappeared; for in so hot a fight of artillery as the one now beginning, they would not have long kept their places, and must soon have been found taking part with the enemy's gunners by helping them to choke our embrasures, and to fill them with cumbersome wrecks.

Captain Oldershaw now found himself engaged against five batteries, and undergoing the concentrated fire of their twenty heavy guns.

However unequal this strife, our four guns were worked so effectively that after two hours, they had silenced the far-famed 'Crow's Nest' battery;* and —a spectacle always enchanting to gunners who compass the change—its disabled guns stood tilted up, making public confession of ruin.

But in vengeance, as it seemed, for this conquest, the enemy then brought to bear on Oldershaw's little battery a greater weight of metal than ever. It might seem that, if not long before,

* The afterwards famous nickname of the Work had not at that time become familiar, and Oldershaw only designated the battery his gunners had silenced as the one that was 'circular'; but there is no doubt that the 'Crow's Nest' and the 'Circular battery' are identical.

the time had now come when a conflict so unequal should cease; but Oldershaw remembered the order to 'work his battery to extremity'; and — not choosing to let his obedience under such a command fall short of being exact, whilst happily sure that his men were still in good heart—he resolved to hold on. For a while, the chief's losses in men went on faster than the disabling of his guns; and there soon came a time when, with three pieces still undisabled, he could barely find unstricken men in number sufficient to work them. Still, all who could toiled heart and soul, and one of those seen (with coat off) to be labouring thus, hard as any, was Oldershaw's subaltern Lieutenant Simpson, a zealous and valiant officer.

At this period of the fight (when still he had three guns in action) Captain Oldershaw sent off a messenger to the 1st Parallel with directions to ask for reinforcements.

Great and greater with every minute was the havoc thenceforth being wrought in his hugely overmatched battery. Soon, another of his guns was disabled; and—insatiate of destruction—the enemy's mighty ship cannon-balls never ceased to come crashing in at a rate computed by some at no less than ten in the minute.

He who happily escaped actual contact with one of these missiles might still not escape its power, for the sand-bags set going by round-shot struck and swept men before them with a terrible violence, inflicting now and then what at first might be

CHAP. VI.

easily taken for death-blows, and leaving a man for the time in an utterly prostrate state.

We observed the immense weight of metal by which, if so minded, the enemy might repress the lone battery of only four 32-pounders; but with all that command of power, how far was he deigning to use it for a small special purpose? Engaged in defending the Fortress on a front of several miles, he of course did not bend all the energies of a hundred guns upon one diminutive battery; but against it, whether acting deliberately, or, as sometimes occurred, in hot anger, he brought to bear what power he chose. And, the power he thus chose to exert against our little lone battery was not at all narrowly stinted. From even the most distant extremity of the blazing arc the batteries that armed the right face of his Great Redan thundered raging against the small prey; and it was well for our 'advanced No. VII.' that a hair's-breadth of uncorrected error in the nicety of 'gun elevation' caused the missiles of war tearing down from the furthermost Work to fly howling and screaming in vain close over the heads of our people. Nowhere else did the enemy seem to be wasting his ordnance-power. From the opposite extremity of the arc, that is, from the Flagstaff Bastion (which had dealt, as we saw, the first blow), the big round-shot again and again came tearing in through the parapet of Oldershaw's little battery; whilst besides, in the north it was powerfully, directly confronted, and confronted, as we have seen, at close

quarters; since from not only the Upper and the Lower Garden batteries, and the rampart formed on the Péressip, but again further east from the ranges of the Barrack Battery and its neighbouring satellites there poured in an unsparing fire, and this, too, at so close a range that for some of the 68-pounders placed high on commanding ground the firing was almost 'point-blank.' On the whole, we can say that the little advanced No. VII. with its four 32-pounder pieces, of which two had now been disabled, was from time to time kept under fire by not less than thirty great guns.*

With all the power yet left them our gunners still answered the storm, but their guns of course, after a while, had been wrought by incessant discharges to a state of intense, scorching heat, and could only be fired at intervals.

Not content with his mighty ascendant in weight of metal the enemy even increased it; and it was on a battery newly opened against him that Oldershaw with his own hands was 'laying' his No. 3 gun when the voice of Mr De Vine (a devoted, brave, non-commissioned officer, standing up on the top of the parapet) was heard giving warning of 'shell'!† Then — delivered by vertical fire — a hollow shot entered the embrasure through which Oldershaw was laying his gun, and achieved what perhaps is

* General Simpson writes: '*At least* 30 guns'; and the italics are his.

† It was for the purpose of giving such warnings that Mr De Vine, in a spirit of valiant self-sacrifice, had asked leave to go up, and stand on the top of the parapet.

CHAP. VI.

unique in the annals of gunnery conflicts; for, killing two, wounding the rest, and yet sparing the Captain himself, it laid the whole of the 'gun detachment' at his feet.

The same widely ravaging shot wrenched away the right wheel of the gun, turned its spokes into deadly missiles, and flung off its 'round' with a force that jammed it deep into the side of the nearest 'traverse.'

Twice before, this same gun had been struck by a shot without becoming unserviceable, but it now of course was disabled.

So, of the four guns with which Oldershaw had begun the conflict there was now only one that remained undisabled. With that one gun, however, the Captain still continued to fight.

In compliance with the request of Captain Oldershaw preferred, as we saw, at a time when he still had three guns undisabled, two fresh 'gun detach-'ments' had, by this time, come down to the battery; but, considering the state of its parapet and of its armament reduced to one gun still remaining in a serviceable state, the Captain did not judge that this succour could now be of any great use. He thoughtfully, rightly determined that the men newly come should not be needlessly sacrificed in the desperate service which had fallen to his own lot, and sent off all those he could spare to find shelter and peace in the empty battery near him.*

In the midst of the havoc surrounding him, Captain

* In the 'advanced No. VIII.,' which had not, as we saw, been then armed, and was unassailed by the enemy.

Oldershaw with his now only gun was obediently working his battery to the enjoined limit of 'extremity,' when he found himself receiving the visit of a brave and true-hearted soldier, who came because he divined that the battery must be in dire trouble. CHAP. VI.

We saw Graham place himself in the 3d Parallel and near to Oldershaw's battery with the double object of watching a hazardous experiment deeply interesting to our Engineers, and if possible helping our gunners to 'get their range.' In that last object, however, he constantly found himself baffled by the keenness, the skill, the alacrity with which the Russians exerted their vast artillery-power; for they did not so much as allow him to find out what points had been reached by shots already discharged. Whenever a gun of ours fired, the garrison instantly answered it with three or four guns from their side, and by thus piling up banks of smoke put it out of the power of Graham to see where the English shot struck.

And, so far as concerned the 'experiment' of operating against the great Fortress with Oldershaw's four advanced guns, Graham seems to have found himself driven to an early and decisive conclusion. 'The battle,' he writes, 'was from the beginning a 'hopeless one for us. . . . No. VII. made a 'gallant fight, but in a short time three out of the 'four guns were disabled, and half the gun detach-'ments killed or wounded.'

Then Graham goes on to say simply, and as

CHAP. VI.

though it were merely a law of any man's nature to go where conditions are desperate :—'About this 'time seeing how our fire had slackened, I visited 'the battery.'

It would have been interesting to hear an account of any conference passing at such a moment, and between two such men as Captain Oldershaw and Lieutenant Graham, but the enemy granted no time. By the blow of a round-shot, or rather by blows from the substances and the mass of stone which the round-shot—after striking a sand-bag—sent driving against his breast, Graham was struck down, and it seemed for a while that he had received his death.*

In the battery, destruction was rife. Shells from time to time dropped down and burst upon the tops of the magazines, blowing up in one instance a number of powder-boxes; in another, tearing bodily off, and carrying away with its blast so much of the all-precious roof as to be choking an embrasure, and silencing its overwhelmed gun under the weight of the ruins. Gunners seeing such incidents might well think perhaps for a moment of the one least beloved form of danger; but happily from the first to the last, there was no magazine that wholly gave way under either the blows of the round-shot, or the bursting of shells on its top.

Elsewhere, however, the havoc had been increasing from minute to minute during a period of several

* The mass of stone was hurled with a force which drove it through Graham's greatcoat, and caused it to strike at his heart. It smashed a watch which was in his waistcoat-pocket.

hours; and at length a time came when nearly the whole of the parapet had been torn into ruins. The battery, wrote Mr De Vine,* was 'almost demolished.' 'My poor little battery,' wrote Oldershaw, 'was 'literally swept away.' †

The men, I believe, would have judged it, as their phrase is, more 'comfortable' to work a gun in the open than in what yet remained of the battery; but so entire was their devotion to the chief that he and they by some magic were all, as it seemed, of one mind. He did not address the brave men in any sort of harangue, but mingled encouraging words, spoken calmly in genial tones with every special direction required for guiding their labours. What they liked was to see him, and to hear him, to feel that they were ruled by his will.‡ With no longer a parapet left that could even do so much as delude them with any specious promise of shelter, they went on working, and working their one undisabled gun.

That one gun however at last became, like the

* With respect to whom, see *ante*, p. 159, and Note (9) in the Appendix.

† And, hear the Engineers who looked at the havoc scientifically, and had to repair it: 'The embrasures and magazine, and the battery 'generally, are much cut up by the enemy's shot and shell.'—Journal Royal Engineers, vol. ii. p. 138, April 13th. 'It' [the No. VII. on 13th April] 'was moreover much broken, and its salients knocked 'into grotesque forms.'—Conolly's History of the Sappers and Miners, vol. ii. p. 275.

‡ Mr De Vine (who was one of them) writes eloquently on the effect produced upon the men by their feeling of devotion to the chief, and the absolute, unmeasured trust they gladly reposed in his guidance.

CHAP. VI.

others, unserviceable, and then—since unable to strike at the enemy, able only to stand and be stricken—the man and the men, one would say, had reached the uttermost limit of what any commanding officer could have meant to assign when directing that the battery should be worked to 'extremity.' Still Oldershaw did not retire, because he had an idea that no such step should be taken without the warrant of 'orders'; and accordingly, even after the silencing of the fourth and last gun, he remained with his men in the battery.

He did not from first to last see that (in harmony with the reasons adduced for undertaking the venture*) there was given him any support from other English batteries.†

Captain Oldershaw had maintained the conflict nearly five hours, when at length Captain Shaw—an officer his superior in rank—came down into the battery, pronounced it untenable, and directed him to retire.(6)

He however was allowed, before moving, to indulge a whim characteristic of the Artillery Arm. Of his guns—all disabled—there were three deranged only so far that they could not be 'laid' for an aim; and these last, although useless of course for anything like fighting purposes, and 'pointed' grotesquely from under the superincumbent ruins, could still be

* See *ante*, pp. 146, 147.

† Whether it was possible that he might have been receiving some little support from other and distant batteries without being able to discern it, artillerymen will judge.

fired—could still therefore be made the means of bantering the enemy's gunners.

This last quaint object achieved by a mocking salute of three guns which proved not to be dumb, although 'silenced' in the Artillery sense, Captain Oldershaw withdrew his small remnant of men from the ruins of what, if for hours, that day, a hard-fighting battery, had since become rather the scene of an almost romantic self-sacrifice.

Captain Oldershaw's lengthened persistence had been sanctioned of course—because dictated—by the order bluntly enjoining him to work his guns to 'extremity'; but one does not very easily see how the long keeping up of a fight by an advanced, weak, isolated, and commanded battery engaged at close quarters against enormous odds, could have well been an object so vital as to warrant indefinite sacrifices; and accordingly, there is room for surmising that Captain Oldfield—an excellent officer—did not mean to have his words construed literally when he gave the direction to Oldershaw.(7)

If the sanction of 'command' had been wanting, one perhaps would be forced to confess that throughout the latter half of this conflict of five hours' duration, the persistency of Oldershaw and his gunners was Chivalry rather than War.

The losses sustained by our gunners in this long,

CHAP. VI.

The losses sustained in Oldershaw's battery.

unequal fight were, of course, very great; and indeed, when people compared the original strength of the detachment with that of the little remnant which came out unscathed at the close of the action, they thought there was ground for saying that the force had been almost 'annihilated'; but, happily, that simple plan of testing the loss involved a material error, because some of those who had entered the battery in the morning were sent on duty elsewhere before the fight came to an end. (8)

The numbers seem to stand thus: The detachment at first comprised 65 gunners. Of these, at the close of the fight, 18 had been moved by Oldershaw, and sent away out of the battery with orders to bear off wounded men; so that thus the number of gunners destined to be in the battery, without being sent away from it in the course of the fight, was no greater than 47. Of those 47, the enormous proportion of 44 were either killed or wounded; and so on the whole it occurred that the remnant of the original body of 65 gunners with which Oldershaw at last marched out of the battery had a strength of only three men. (9)

However, along with these three, the 18 men we saw charged with duties outside of the battery made up a strength of 21 gunners not only surviving but unwounded, and of the warlike spirit of this score of men we are presently going to hear.

The fairest parallel to this engagement of Older-

shaw's might be found, I believe, on board ship— on board some ship of war close beset in the fiery 'heart of oak' days; for it would be hard to say where—on dry land—a like concourse of shot and shell ever had such a five hours' revelry in one small, yet still fighting battery as the one that fate reserved for our advanced No. VII. on the 13th of April; and in truth, to bring about what took place, there was needed a concurrence of circumstances that may never before have been joined:— CHAP. VI.

1. A small and weakly armed battery brought and kept all alone for some hours beneath the fire at close range of a mighty artillery commanding it from higher ground:

2. A sand-bag parapet strong enough to wrestle with the 68-pounders, but not strong enough to arrest them:

3. A captain not only directed to work his four guns to extremity, but obeying the grim command, and carrying it through to the letter:

4. A body of gunners so valiant, and so passionately devoted to their chief that — without any seeming unwillingness to be sacrificed with him— they worked and fought on to the last.

On the day of the fight the Brigadier-General commanding (afterwards Sir Richard Dacres) rode accompanied by his staff to the tent of Captain Oldershaw, and there thanked the Captain personally for his exploit of that morning, saying, 'You 'fought your battery nobly, and are an honour to 'your regiment.' Asked by Dacres what he would like, he said, 'Staff duty as Adjutant,' and a Staff General Dacres; his words to Oldershaw.

CHAP. VI.

appointment as Adjutant he quickly received. A greater Staff appointment soon followed, but that last one withdrew him from the Sebastopol theatre of war.

An order given out by mistake;

On the evening of the 13th, our authorities promulgated a direction, which was to be the next day, 'in orders.' This order 'in orders' directed a body of men told off for the purpose to go down in the morning—the morning of the 14th—under the command of Captain Oldershaw, and to fight the 'advanced No. VII.' The order—given out by mistake—was countermanded in time to prevent any baneful confusion;* but it happily remained in force long enough to elicit the manful petition of which I am going to speak.

From the moment of becoming apprised of the order 'in orders' until he received the countermand at 4 o'clock the next morning, Captain Oldershaw followed a course which was characteristic of the man and of the soldierly bent of his mind. He did not judge it his duty to interchange explanations with the 'authorities,' but—in silence—to obey their commands; and accordingly in the early morning of the 14th, he was preparing to go on parade and to march down once more with the men there already assembling to the scene of yesterday's havoc, when he received a message so touching that it ought to

* It would have clashed with the order which was given, as will be afterwards seen, to Captain Henry.

CHAP. VI.

and the touching incident to which it gave rise.

be known and remembered—a message truly illustrative of the quality of our soldiers, and the love, the trust, the devotion with which they range under an officer who, whilst able in other respects, seems instinctively prone to hard fighting.

The score of undisabled survivors who had fought under Oldershaw might be few, yet were many enough to have an aggregate sentiment—the sentiment of a body proved staunch by the ordeal of a long, hearty fight; and these brave men believing that the direction set out 'in orders' must import a resolve to go on, as it were, with their fight, they were filled with an eager desire to be once more amid the 'mad sand-bags' of 'advanced 'No. VII.,' affronting the pride of Sebastopol, and obeying their favourite chief. Knowing that a sand-bag battery, though broken up into ruins, could still be quickly repaired, and that all the disabled guns might be either made ready for use or else be replaced before sunrise, they saw before them a prospect that strangely fascinated their imaginations—a prospect of fighting once more under Oldershaw, and 'having it out' with the enemy on the site of their five hours' strife.

They imagined, it seems, that if Oldershaw would prefer their request, they, although not 'told off' for the service in accordance with strict 'turn of duty,' might still have him once more for their chief in that new fight on old ground which the order 'in 'orders' announced.

The message that resulted from this nobly warlike

CHAP. VI.

impulsion was brought to Captain Oldershaw in his tent by the 'corporal on duty' in the artillery camp, and delivered in dry, simple words:—'The men who 'fought with you yesterday, sir, wish to fight again 'with you.' Captain Oldershaw answered the Corporal, and briefly confessed himself proud. He spoke of his own feelings only towards those who had sent him the message; but our people now, after long years, will understand and will share the pride he took in such men.

VII.

Ground for laying full stress on the fight of the 13th of April.

One is all the more bound to lay stress on this fight of the 13th of April since—withdrawn by a series of mischances from the cognisance of the Commander-in-Chief—it was never by him recorded in either a public despatch, or any less formal document.(10)

Besides Lieutenant Graham, disabled in the way we observed, there was simply no witness of the fight of the 13th of April except Captain Oldershaw himself and the officers and men engaged under him.(11) Oldershaw was not ordered to make a report of his fight, and—true to that singular modesty—or was it not soldierly pride?—which I have ascribed to him—he not only omitted to volunteer any formal account of his engagement, but even refrained from those unofficial statements which might have sufficed to make the truth known.(12)

CHAP. VI.

So austere a neglect of the task of self-assertion by an officer in command of a detached force was, after all, too majestic for this busy maze of a world, and his subsequent absence from the Crimea—because on staff duty elsewhere—completed the chain of circumstances which prevented Lord Raglan from receiving any account of the fight of the 13th of April in the 'advanced No. VII.' On that subject the Artillery Records fell into a state of confusion, and so remain to this day.

Sir Gerald Graham.

But the chasm thus left in our records has now been substantially filled. We saw an Engineer officer keenly watching the fight; but he was only a young lieutenant, well able indeed to give testimony of the highest value, yet not to speak with authority. Time, however, has changed the conditions; for the then young lieutenant was destined to attain to high fame in the profession of arms; and it is with the mature judgment of a general officer well versed in the business of war that now he reviews what he witnessed on the 13th of April 1855—the fight maintained under Oldershaw in the 'advanced No. VII.'

His judgment of Oldershaw's fight.

Speaking thoughtfully of a branch of the service which was not, remember, his own, Sir Gerald Graham says:—'The Royal Artillery never hesi-'tated to engage at any odds, and they never had a 'hotter morning's work than in No. VII. on that '13th of April.'*

* Letter to me, dated Cairo, Egypt, Nov. 18, 1883.

VIII.

Both the advanced Nos. VII. and VIII. batteries got ready for fighting on the morning of the 14th.

The 'advanced No. VII.' was restored and prepared for new fights with so great a despatch as to be again in working order before sunrise on the very next day, that is, on the 14th of April; and, its sister work 'No. VIII.' having also at last been armed, the commanders of the two little batteries now supposed to be both in readiness could engage them, men thought, side by side, in a renewal of the venturesome conflict which had been maintained the day before, that is, on the 13th, by our 'advanced No. 'VII.' alone.

Engagement of the No. VII. battery under Captain Henry on morning of the 14th of April.

On this day (the 14th) the 'advanced No. VII.' was commanded by Captain Henry* of the Royal Artillery, having under him Lieutenant Conolly,† and thirty-five men.

Again, as on the previous morning, it was with four 32-pounders only that the 'advanced No. VII.' at daylight once more delivered its challenge to such of the hundred guns opposite as the enemy might deign to unleash against so small an antagonist. ‡

Captain Henry engaged the Barrack Batteries, and they answered him with a power that soon proved him to be hugely overmatched; whilst also he was assailed front and flank by the Garden Batteries, and

* Now Lieutenant-General Henry. † Now no more.

‡ As to the hundred guns *potentially* opposing our advanced batteries, see *ante*, p. 145. Much of what goes before, including especially the pages from p. 144 to p. 150, applies to the conditions under which this fight of the 14th took place.

placed besides under fire—under strong enfilading fire—by the (proper) left face of the Flagstaff Bastion. CHAP. VI.

In so far as Captain Henry could see, his four guns were working no havoc in the mighty array of the 'Barrack' defences; and the enemy,—not, this time, provoked by the silencing of his 'Crow's 'Nest' battery,—was of course unimpelled by the rage—rage vented in unmeasured storms of artillery-fire—which had given a wild, strange character to the fight of the previous day maintained in the same little battery; whilst moreover, this day on its right, the now armed and unmasked 'No. VIII.' was drawing some of the fire that might otherwise have been lavished on the sister battery. It would seem that, when restoring the shattered parapet of this 'advanced No. VII.,' our Engineers must have given it a greater degree of strength than it had on the previous morning; for, although it is true there were instances of the 68-pounders impinging upon the tops of the parapets, and thence driving the sand-bags before them, it was generally through one or other of the embrasures that the shot and the shell on this day came leaping into the battery. One of these took a life of much worth. Brave, zealous, endowed beyond other mortals with the gift of cheerliness, Boyd (a corporal of the Royal Artillery) was laying a gun, and casting a satisfied glance along the line of its 'sights,' when a cannon-ball shot away the upper part of his skull, and killed him so instantaneously that his face —with the blood pouring down—still kept its radiant

CHAP. VI.

smile. The body of this valiant corporal, with that of another good artilleryman who had also been killed, was placed with care on a spot where one of the traverses seemed to offer a semblance of shelter; but soon, a shell blew up the traverse and buried the dead in its ruins.

Out of his small force Captain Henry lost two men killed, and five men wounded.

From each of his 32-pounders he fired about one hundred rounds, but one of his guns was, after a while, disabled.

Kept for nearly eight hours under a powerful fire, the battery and its embrasures suffered havoc. 'I 'remember,' says Colonel Torriano, 'going down to 'see the No. VII. battery, and found it quite a 'wreck. I always wondered how Henry and his 'detachments could have stood up to it as they did 'for so long.'*

'Stand up to it,' however, they did with an admirable valour and persistency during a period of nearly eight hours, never ceasing their fire until—at half-past one o'clock—the reliefs came down to succeed them.†

Simultaneous engagement

Manned by Captain Walcott‡ of the Royal Artillery, with under him Lieutenant Torriano,§ Assistant-

* Letter of 30th Oct. 1883.

† Lord Raglan's warm appreciation of the services of Captain Henry and the officers and men under his command will be shown *post*, p. 176.

‡ Now no more.

§ Now Colonel Torriano, R.A., commanding the Royal Artillery at Sheerness. To the best of his memory, the armament of the No. VIII. was as I state it.

CHAP. VI.

of the No. VIII. battery, under Captain Walcott, on the morning of the 14th.

Surgeon Cockerell, and the requisite number of gunners, the 'advanced No. VIII.' was on the right of the 'advanced No. VII.,' and in the same—that is, the 3d—Parallel. Armed with six 32-pounders, it courted the fire of those same hundred guns which—potentially—opposed the sister battery; and by some indeed of those guns—guns arming the (proper) right face of the great Redan—it could be even more effectively searched.

Thence accordingly, and (in an opposite direction) from the Garden Batteries as well as from other works, our 'advanced No. VIII.' was brought and kept under a strong fire—fire, some of it, enfilading, and some bestowed on its front.

Within the first half-hour, two of Walcott's guns were disabled, and he began to lose men.

And to this cannonade no effective reply could be made. Our Engineers had not found time to shape down the 'soles' of the embrasures to the level required; so that thus the allotments of space left open in front of our guns were not sufficiently deep. Discharged under such conditions, the round-shot impinged every time on the outermost edge of the 'sole'; and—because by this contact deflected into a higher path—flew harmlessly over the object at which our people had aimed it.

Perplexed by this baffling obstacle, Captain Walcott went to the sister battery and there consulted its chief. Captain Henry advised that, rather than submit to be silenced, the 'advanced No. VIII.' should, however ineffectively, continue its fire; and,

CHAP. VI.

when afterwards Walcott despatched Lieutenant Torriano to the 1st Parallel with orders to represent the condition of things in the 'advanced No. VIII.,' and to ask for further instructions, he received from his commanding officer some words of guidance equivalent to Captain Henry's counsels.

Whether rightly or wrongly conceived, this instruction made clear the path of duty; and Captain Walcott with the officers and gunners he commanded passed manfully through a long ordeal that could hardly have been otherwise than galling to warlike men; for they had to remain submitting to so much of fire as the enemy might vouchsafe them, without having themselves any sense of a power to strike in return. For the sake of what they owed to punctilio, they of course could go on with a fire which, if harmless to the enemy, was still provoking enough to make him persevere in his efforts against their own hampered battery; and this they faithfully did, never ceasing from the task thrown upon them till, after nearly eight hours of what was perhaps too one-sided to be aptly called 'fighting,' the appointed reliefs in due course came down to take their places.

Of the force under Walcott, Assistant-Surgeon Cockerell and seven men were disabled.

It was in recognition of the services thus rendered in the No. VII. and No. VIII. batteries on the 14th of April that Lord Raglan awarded high praise to Captain Henry and Captain Walcott and the officers and men engaged under them; ([13]) doing this at

the first by an Order of the 15th of April, which not only expressed his 'approbation of their conduct,' but also his 'warmest thanks for their gallantry and 'steady perseverance in the discharge of their duty;' and two days afterwards by a despatch of like import addressed to the Secretary of State.*

The engagements in the Nos. VII. and VIII. batteries on the 14th continued by the reliefs until dark.

Our reliefs, bravely steadfast, gave full effect to the theory then largely accepted in camp—to the theory laying it down that with even so much as one gun in an undisabled state, these batteries ought not to turn silent until after sunset. Their tenacity even exceeded what opinion enjoined; for when darkness had fully set in, our people in camp were still hearing the fire of the two 'advanced 'batteries.'(14)

Though constraining me indeed to record them for the sake of our valiant artillerymen, and the country they served, those fights that we have seen undertaken—undertaken one hardly sees why—in two small, forlornly placed batteries, were not, after all, efforts destined, nor even, I may say, at all calculated to govern the course of the siege.

* I believe that Lord Raglan trusted mainly to the Report framed by Major (now Lieutenant-General) Bent, R.E. See Appendix, Note (13). With respect to the brilliant part taken by General (then Captain) Bent, R.E., in the battle of Giurgevo, see *ante*, vol. ii. chap. 2.

IX.

I lay no stress at all on the havoc sustained at this period by the principal batteries of the Allies, since it was not so great as to be overpowering, could be always repaired in due time, and did not for a moment coerce them into either any change of their plans, or any relaxation of effort. What kept within bounds the intensity and the duration of their bombardment, was—not the enemy's fire, but—the limit they knew there must be to all their stores—though immense—of heavy siege-gun ammunition.

What put limits on the bombardment.

Consumption of siege-gun ammunition.

With their siege-guns in this bombardment of ten days the Allies are believed to have fired some 130,000 shots, and to have been answered by the Russians with about 88,000.*

Losses of men sustained by the Allies in the artillery conflict.

Though inflicting on the Russians huge losses, of which we shall afterwards hear, the mere artillery conflict provoked by this lengthened bombardment cost the French and the English together no more than a few hundred men.

Large proportion of the losses sustained by our sailors.

Of this loss in killed and wounded a large proportion, as usual, was borne by our sailors. They had whims of their own so deep-rooted that authority did not like to disturb them, or else—for this too is possible—the young naval officers present were them-

* Todleben, ii. p. 169. As to the weight of the respective salvoes—French, English, and Russian—see *ante*, p. 133.

selves prone to share in the joyous, dare-devil spirit which always gave life to a combat maintained by those men of the sea. A landsman observing the numbers in which they liked to work a great gun might almost suppose them determined by some such gay rule as that of 'the more the merrier'; and, when they had loaded, they did not deign to move aside in such way as to obtain the shelter of the parapet, but maintained instead a 'look-out' through the embrasure open before them. They were masters of the art of bantering the enemy by making humorous signs to him; and, too often a Russian officer, when seen to be bending his field-glass on one of these batteries, was destined to find himself mocked by some kind of raillery, as for instance, by a seaman standing up on the top of the parapet to tease his observer by gestures, or perhaps by the favourite prank of extinguishing his own mirthful head beneath an inverted bucket. By these careful arrangements our seamen proved able to draw upon themselves much more than their due share of fire, and their losses were heavy; but the spirit they kept alive was a treasure of untold worth.

Their ways whilst manning a battery.

To appreciate the general tenor of the bombardment, to teach ourselves whether it opened, or whether it failed to open a hopeful path for assault, and withal, to learn something of the stress that it put on the enduring courage of the garrison, we must leave the Allies for a while, and pass over into Sebastopol.

CHAP. VI.

X.

The defenders of Sebastopol.

Those duties and pleasures of Easter which had long been engrossing the enemy, and even for some minutes luring him from his post in the front, were allowed, one may say, to commingle with the fighting maintained in his batteries. At a time when the Flagstaff Bastion lay stricken, and torn, and bleeding beneath a fire of great power then hotly raging against it, the work was visited by General Osten-Sacken (the brave officer in command at Sebastopol), who came to give each of the combatants his rital embrace, and inform every man of them separately—inform him under round-shot and shell—of the rising of Christ from the dead. To that practice of a Church which in peace-time our young Western Churches might spurn, the hour of battle gave dignity. At every step the commander thus addressing Easter words to his troops, was greeted, was followed, was cheered by the roar of their warlike 'hourrahs.'

Their Easter festivities mingling with the fights in the batteries.

The fortitude they needed for their task.

If thus cheered for a while by religious and festive distractions, the enemy was at all events entering on a task that demanded rare fortitude. Because forcing him to maintain a great parsimony of fire under a hot cannonade, the dearth of ammunition was torture; whilst moreover it always compelled him to harbour the ugly thought that, from this mere material want of sufficing barrels of gunpowder, Sebastopol might be des-

Their want of ammunition.

tined to fall; and, when he sought to parry the evil by borrowing a supply from the sea-forts or the unsunken ships, those resources were at first closed against him by signs that they all might be needed to meet an attack from the fleets. He was driven to the expedient of obtaining for his Flagstaff and Central Batteries a small supply of gunpowder taken from out of the infantry cartridges.

The sacrifices they had to make in order to be ready to meet assaults.

And, because of the need that there was to keep troops in readiness for withstanding the expected assaults, he had to bear cruel losses; so that, whilst the Allies by comparison were losing only a few from the fire their bombardment had challenged, he every day, whilst it lasted, was sending heavy numbers of his people to their graves on the Severnaya, or else—painful contrast of thoughts!—to the once brilliant, gay, sparkling ball-room in the Assembly House of the Nobles, then changed to a reeking hospital. Within the ten days taken up by this April bombardment, and mainly from the effect of its fire, the Russians lost 6000 men.* In almost cold blood, and with a greater distinctness than commonly attends such hard sacrifices, these thousands of men were surrendered to what I have called a 'prerogative'—the prerogative wielded by him who—resolving to take the offensive—is able to choose time and place.

The heroism of their defence at this time.

The submission to losses so great without means of avenging them was a striking example of passive, enduring heroism; whilst of that other kind of

* 6131 killed and wounded. Todleben, vol. ii. p. 170.

CHAP. VI.

heroism which, along with a valiant and protracted confronting of danger, demands also a prodigious exertion of human energy, the Russians gave signal proof; for when towards the close of each day, they found their defences in ruins, they calmly moved out in the twilight, began to repair their Works, and, though kept all the time under vertical fire which was commonly one of great power, toiled on throughout the night, never failing (except in one instance) to bring the shattered defences into a state for fighting again so soon as the morning should break. To attain such an end, no sacrifice, says the great Engineer, should be ever considered too great, and according to his belief, it was by efforts in that direction that the French for ten days, were prevented from carrying forward their siege-works; whilst also he holds that thus checked, they perforce became greatly discouraged, and even shaken in purpose.*

On the whole, one may say—and there is no higher praise to utter—that, although conducted, this time, with the aid of mighty appliances, their resistance to the April bombardment was not unworthy of those who—inspired by the then living Korniloff, and the matchless Colonel of Sappers still kindling and guiding their energies—had begun under desperate conditions their glorious defence of Sebástopol.

In some respects, after seven days, the ordeal became less trying; for on the night of the 15th,

* Todleben, vol. ii. p. 187.

CHAP. VI.

the enemy obtained a supply of gunpowder, with assurance that much more would follow; and soon, he began to enjoy a good measure of those many blessings which are commonly denied to a Fortress when really beleaguered; for the needed ammunition came peacefully into Sebastopol, whilst the garrison was strengthened and comforted by the arrival of reinforcements, and besides, by exchanges of troops made at will with the Russian Field army.

Supplies of ammunition and reinforcements.

Apart from that object of checking the French approaches with which we were dealing elsewhere, the enemy's task was twofold. He had, if he could, to prevent the assailant's artillery from opening a path for assault.

And, because he well knew that his efforts in that first direction might, all of them, fail, he was forced, as we have seen—and this at a dire cost of life—to keep himself in absolute readiness for the climax in that case assumed to be certain, and close at hand.

The tasks which the defence of Sebastopol at this time involved.

Towards maintaining that terrible 'readiness' throughout the ten days' bombardment, the enemy, it is certain enough, did all that well could be compassed by skill of the highest order, by vast unremitting energy, and by resolute sacrifices of life exacted under trying conditions; but did he prove able to achieve the first part of his task, and prevent the besieger's artillery from opening through the defences a practicable path for assault?

CHAP. VI.

To see our way towards an answer, we need not be taking account of the havoc from time to time wrought on the enemy's other defences, but must look to those Works which more closely protected the life of his Fortress by blocking the paths for assaulting it.

On the side of the Faubourg, those Works were the Malakoff Tower itself and the counter-approaches protecting it.

On the side of Sebastopol Town, the 'Flagstaff' and the 'Central' Bastions with their closely adjacent auxiliaries.

Between the two 'fronts for attack' which thus offered themselves to bombardment on both the east and the west, there stood ranged an extended and strongly armed line of ramparts which included the 'Great Redan,' and its western neighbours the 'Barrack,' the 'Creek,' and the 'Garden' Batteries; but, although these Works all formed good links in the enemy's chain of defence, they still guarded his Fortress at points which were not for the moment endangered.

Dealing first with the Faubourg, its principal counter-approaches were the two White Redoubts on Mount Inkerman, and the now strong Kamtchatka Lunette which covered the front of the Malakoff.

The two White Redoubts crushed and silenced,

The two White Redoubts on Mount Inkerman were confronted by the French, and by them so successfully battered as to be silenced and crushed on the second day of the bombardment;* but what

* Todleben, vol. ii. p. 127.

is more, the conditions were such that the Russians for once proved unable to repair the havoc, and they supposed that the 'worst' was at hand. They assembled their troops before dawn and awaited the expected assault.*

and not repaired;

The French did not follow up their advantage, and refrained from laying hold by assault of the path which their guns had laid open to them. This was the more astonishing to Todleben, since he knew—and supposed all must know—that by taking the White Redoubts the French would have ensured the fall of the Kamtchatka Lunette.

but still not assaulted by the French.

When the enemy afterwards found that the French were not moving in the thus opened path of conquest, he proceeded at his leisure to repair and rearm the two White Redoubts thus strangely left under his sway.

We next come to the Malakoff Tower; but regarded as an 'objective' for the fire of the April bombardment, this Work, though not spared altogether, was of course for the moment a less provocative target than that bold Kamtchatka Lunette which had sprung up to cover its front.

The Malakoff covered by counter-approaches, and not therefore strongly assailed.

This Lunette, as we have seen, was confronted, and even in siege-form 'approached,' by a part of Canrobert's army; whilst also the Work was so circumstanced that it could be assailed by the French with their 'Artilleur' range of great guns established on the slopes of Mount Inkerman, and on the other flank by no less than nine English batteries pouring fire of great power from the precincts of 'Gordon's

The Kamtchatka Lunette brought to ruin.

* Ibid., p. 130.

CHAP. VI.

'Attack.' By this strong and concentrated fire the Lunette was 'cruelly tried' the first day of the bombardment, and brought to a state of sheer ruin;* but, the French not assaulting it, the Work was restored at night; and thenceforth, although mightily plied by vertical fire, it was less torn by round-shot.†

Not, however, assaulted by the French;

but still 'approached' by their sap.

There were signs—and the signs proved true guides—that the French would not promptly assault the Work; for they continued to approach it by sap.‡

Complete failure of the English batteries against the Great Redan.

In all their artillery efforts against the Great Redan our people—and with them mainly rested this part of the task—may simply be said to have failed; since by dint of their ten days' bombardment they did not lay open the Work, did not make it more ripe for assault than it was when the firing began. Here and there in the batteries of the Work and its neighbours they of course, every day, wrought some mischief, but mischief so far from overwhelming that always, and with comparative ease, the enemy found means to repair it in the course of the following night. General Todleben was able to say that in its conflict with the English batteries, his Great Redan won a 'full victory.'§

The Town Front.

Moving always from east to west we come last to the close-threatened part of what men called the

* Todleben, p. 109.
† Ibid., pp. 127, 132.
‡ Ibid., pp. 140, 143.
§ Ibid., p. 182.

CHAP. VI.

'Town Front'—to the 'Flagstaff Bastion,' to its neighbours the 'Central,' and the lesser Works clustering near them. There, the Russians in many a combat had been feeling the keen, sustained vigour of General Pélissier;* and it seemed to them that the French, in a resolute and peremptory mood were intent to take the life of the Fortress by coming at last to close quarters with its Flagstaff Bastion.†

The Russians imagining the French to be resolute, and determined to seize the Flagstaff Bastion.

To win this all-mastering key, it was necessary, or at all events right, that the neighbouring 'Central 'Bastion' and other adjacent Works should be also assailed by siege-guns.

On Monday the 9th April, the first day of the bombardment, the Central Bastion with its auxiliary batteries suffered heavily under the fire, and towards evening was reduced to silence; whilst also in the crenelled wall near it, there was wrought a breach seven yards wide. The Flagstaff Bastion itself was declared by Todleben to have been 'literally buried 'under an enormous mass of hollow projectiles which 'inflicted upon it great damage, and terrible losses 'of men.' At sunset on this, as on every succeeding day of the bombardment, the task of repairing began, and was continued all night.‡

Havoc sustained by the Flagstaff Bastion and its auxiliaries on the first day.

Next day—the 10th of April—the besiegers

* Then commanding the 1st Corps, see *post*, pp. 202-208.

† That the fall of this Bastion would involve the fall of Sebastopol, see *post*, p. 188 and p. 194.

‡ When I speak of 'repairs' and 'repairing,' I include substitutions; as for instance, the replacing of crippled guns by sound ones, and the construction of new defences with which to close a gap opened in part of the crenelled wall.

CHAP. VI.

renewed their fire; and the dearth of ammunition from which the enemy suffered was on this day brought home to him painfully by orders directing that the guns with which he replied to the mighty bombardment should only be fired at long intervals. On this, as on the previous day, the Flagstaff Bastion was 'buried' once more under a mass of projectiles, and eight of its guns were dismounted; whilst besides almost all its embrasures were brought to ruin. There at last remained only two guns with which to continue the action;* and, although for some reason the French had not clenched their success yet more tightly by the opportune use of 'dismounting batteries' established on well-chosen sites, it was judged by him who best knew that the all-precious Flagstaff Bastion which he held to be the key of Sebastopol had at last been made ripe for assault.† This besides, as we saw, was the day when the White Redoubts seemed to be placed at the mercy of the French; and accordingly Todleben writes:—'We were then 'in expectation of seeing the Allies take advantage 'of this opportunity for advancing to the assault of 'the Flagstaff Bastion and the White Redoubts.'

So, on the second day;

On the 11th of April, the French artillery-fire brought the Central Bastion and its auxiliary the Schwartz Redoubt to a state of utter disorder,

so, on the third day;

* Todleben, p. 127.

† According to Todleben, the French were in possession of admirable sites for any such dismounting batteries; and he particularly specifies one—viz., the site of their Mortar Battery, 'No. 25, *bis*.' —Ibid., p. 109.

and assailed the Flagstaff Bastion with so great a power that all the guns in its salient were dismounted and all the embrasures of its left face destroyed.*

so, on the fourth day;

On the 12th of April the Flagstaff Bastion was again plied with violent fire, and Todleben judged it to be in a critical state.†

so, on the fifth day;

On the 13th of April the enemy concentrated his efforts on the Flagstaff Bastion, which was once more thrown into a state of complete disorder, and towards evening it was silenced.‡

so, on the sixth day.

On the 14th as on former days of the bombardment, the Flagstaff Bastion was the Work that suffered the most.§

State of Flagstaff Bastion.

By this time, the Flagstaff Bastion had been under a fire of great power during several successive days; and Todleben judged that, to keep it in fighting condition, a more than common effort was needed. There were therefore applied to this task the concentrated energies of no less than 1500 men who toiled all night in the battery, and with so much the more of devotion since they toiled, all the time, under fire.‖

The great effort made to repair it.

Peril of the Bastion on the seventh day;

On the 15th of April again, the Flagstaff Bastion lay stricken under a devastating fire; and it was only, says Todleben, from the brave emulation of all its defenders that this Work more menaced than all others by assault maintained its means of defence.¶

* Ibid., p. 131.
† Ibid., p. 137 *et seq.*
‡ Ibid, p. 140.
§ Ibid., p. 147.
‖ Ibid., p. 141.
¶ Ibid., p. 147.

CHAP. VI.

No effort was spared to keep the Work in a condition for answering assault with mitrail.*

The evening of this 15th of April was the one on which our allies opened up by explosion three craters in front of the Flagstaff Bastion;† and, since this measure visibly offered to aid the advance of infantry, there seemed to be now one more reason for making sure that French columns would be presently assaulting the Work.‡

on the eighth day;

On the 16th of April, the Flagstaff Bastion was once more 'buried' under a mass of projectiles, and its armament was thrown into a state of utter disorder; whilst also its embrasures and its merlons were demolished and swept away.§

on the ninth day;

On the 17th of April, the Flagstaff Bastion with its auxiliary the Kostomaroff Battery sustained heavy injuries, having five guns dismounted, and six gun-carriages broken; whilst those of its embrasures which confronted the advanced works of the French were, most of them, demolished.

on the tenth day. Desperate state of Bastion.

On the 18th of April, the Flagstaff Bastion was the main object of the besieger's fire; and at the close of this the last day of the general bombardment, the Work was in so ill a plight as to be judged no longer sustainable by even augmented exertions; since apart from that outward, that instantly visible havoc which the labour of each night had made good, the continued fire by degrees had been acting against the

* Todleben, p. 147.

† See *post*, p. 198.

‡ Todleben, vol. ii. p. 150.

§ The 'merlons' are those parts of the parapet which stand between the embrasures.

strength of the Work with a cumulative effect, and had caused at last injuries of the deeper sort that could hardly be met by any common 'repairing.' The salient of the Bastion had fallen in, and its ruin seemed to be imminent;* but, like all the preceding temptations to assault the Work, this last one, great as it seems, was successfully resisted by Canrobert.

Cessation of the general bombardment.

On the 19th, the general bombardment ceased, and under a flag of truce agreed to for the burial of the dead, French and Russian officers met at the boundary line. In the course of the friendly conversation that followed, they exchanged warm acknowledgments of the prowess displayed by their respective foes; and it was then that a straddling comparison which afterwards had vogue in Paris is said to have first been made. In recognising the splendid tenacity of the defence a French officer compared the siege of Sebastopol to the siege of Troy. He did not say (as said Menelaus according to one tradition) that the siege had been a wretched mistake.†

Flag of truce. Compliments exchanged between French and Russian officers.

'Siege of Troy.'

Continuation of the bombardment directed against the Flagstaff Bastion and its auxiliaries.

In the course of the four days that followed the cessation of the general bombardment, the Flagstaff Bastion with its neighbouring auxiliaries continued to suffer heavily under the fire of the besiegers, and on the 20th, the breach wrought in the 'crenelled 'wall' was increased to a breadth of 28 yards.

On the 21st of April, the Flagstaff Bastion was reduced to complete silence; and this, we shall see,

* Todleben, p. 156. † Lemprière, *voce* Helen.

CHAP. VI.

Their peril on the 21st of April.

was the day when the French, after dark, proved able to top the craters opened up by their mining, to join them all three together, and to connect them with their system of trenches, thus establishing at last their 4th Parallel at a distance of but a hundred paces from the counterscarp of the opposite Work. Then indeed the concurring success of two separate and vast operations might well seem to threaten a crisis in the life of the Flagstaff Bastion.

At the cost of exciting an ebullition of warlike wrath in his own army, General Canrobert still abstained from assaulting the battered Work.

XI.

Question whether the bombardment opened paths for assault;

Here then is a long string of facts, pointing all of them in the same direction; but, to judge of their cogency, and say whether this great bombardment did or not open paths for assault, it is right to hear the voice of authority.

answered by the facts, and by the authoritative opinion of General Todleben.

Commanding on this subject more weight than any other man of our times, General Todleben answers the question.

Having previously disclosed an opinion that the two White Redoubts on Mount Inkerman, and the Kamtchatka Lunette might have been successfully and advantageously stormed, he goes on to speak of the Flagstaff Bastion, and says of it that after having undergone a constant and violent bombardment the Work was 'in a desperate plight. Its artillery had

'been dismounted, its embrasures and its merlons 'almost entirely demolished, and a part of its salient 'had fallen in. So, during each of these days we 'were continually expecting to see the enemy take 'advantage of the critical state to which the bastion 'was reduced, and advance to the assault of the 'Work.' *

'The French might have advanced to the assault 'of this Bastion with an absolute certainty of success, 'and this so much the more since they found them-'selves at a distance from it of only some hundred 'paces.' †

After stating that the Allies had planned assaults, and failed to execute them, he goes on to say:—'It 'is thus that the Allies failed to profit by the im-'portant advantage they had obtained; yet they 'had it completely in their power to take the Flag-'staff Bastion, and that would have carried with it 'the fall of Sebastopol. Let us remember that, like 'the rest of the defences, the Flagstaff Bastion had 'been never secure against an attack by assault, and 'that at this time from the effect of a prolonged 'bombardment, it was in a state of half ruin, because 'a part of its salient had fallen in. Each day, after 'a firing of some hours, its artillery was thrown into 'a state of complete disorder, and it happened several 'times that the Work could only fire with two guns. 'The violent fire of mortars under which the Bastion 'was constantly kept forbade our keeping there 'more than a weak garrison; and even this was not

* Todleben, p. 181. † Ibid., p. 182.

CHAP. VI.

'kept within the Work itself, but placed under cover 'in rear of the gorge, for otherwise the enemy's shells 'must have inevitably destroyed the whole force.'

'Under such conditions, the besieger, with the 'power of choosing his own day and his own hour 'for the assault, would always have been able to an- 'ticipate our troops on the ramparts of the Bastion.'*

Then, after showing with care and detail that the fate of the Bastion, if assaulted, could not have been averted by any of the Works on its flanks, or by any of those in its rear,† the great defender of Sebastopol goes on to say what the besiegers might have done:‡—

'After having occupied the Flagstaff Bastion, and 'fortified himself in that advantageous position 'where the ditch of the Work offered a covered lodg- 'ment for large reinforcements, the besiegers might 'have turned its batteries against the Works of the 'Central Bastion which, deprived of the co-operation 'of the troops of the 2d section, would have been 'soon reduced to the same plight as the Flagstaff 'Bastion.'

'The fall of the Flagstaff and the Central Bastion 'would have necessarily rendered impossible all 'further defence of Sebastopol.'([15])

The bombardment achieved its set purpose;

The bombardment must therefore be said to have really achieved its set purpose; but then, after all, the proceeding was only preparative, and the

* Todleben, p. 185. † Ibid., pp. 185, 186. ‡ Ibid., p. 186.

French did not take their next step.* After having brought to bear on their object for several months both strong energies, and immense State resources, the Allies at last with their siege-guns laid open fit paths for assault to General Canrobert. He did not use them when opened; and therefore, of course, what resulted to the Allies was a huge waste of time and of power, with a yet further loss of the ascendancy won by their battles.

but, not being followed up, it resulted in harm to the Allies.

To understand why the Allies thus abstained from assaulting his Fortress, General Todleben has exerted divining power.† He had not, however, the clue. It was only in a later year that the Government of France—then once more a Republic—allowed a servant of the State to search the long-hidden archives of the War Department, and on their authority show that what had passed for an Army sincerely employed by its Chief in earnest, though mismanaged efforts against the lines of Sebastopol, was, after all, only an Army kept waiting for Louis Napoleon, and meanwhile restrained from engaging in any determined attack.‡

Todleben's inquiry; the clue.

* I say 'the French,' not the Allies, because it was only to the French that an opportunity of assaulting accrued.

† Todleben, p. 186 *et seq.*

‡ The disclosure was made through Monsieur Rousset, a public functionary on the staff of the French War Department. See *ante*, cap. v.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL (WITH EXCLUSION OF THE APRIL BOMBARDMENT, ALREADY NARRATED) FROM THE 9TH OF APRIL TO THE MIDDLE OF MAY.

I.

CHAP. VII.

SIMULTANEOUSLY with the great cannonade, and with those troubled counsels which lasted until the middle of May, there took place not only some fights, but also some other occurrences that must not be left unobserved.

Bizot mortally wounded.

On the 11th of April, the French—and indeed I will say the Allies — sustained a painful loss. Whilst making his way along one of our unfinished trenches, General Bizot was struck by a shot, and the wound, some days later, proved mortal. Commanding the French Engineers, he had pursued his huge task with a zeal that never relaxed. So habitually a scorner of danger that he always had seemed to be courting it, he preserved in the most trying moments a noble serenity of mind, with be-

sides that serenity of temper which was one of the characteristics of his kindly nature.* The French army had always held Bizot to be a man of genuine worth.† Disloyally treated, and weakened by his Emperor's self-seeking intrigue, he still was so true a soldier that he did not allow himself to become at all soured by the overshadowing presence of Niel, and went on thinking only of duty, duty, duty. From the counsel we heard Bizot giving on the 10th of March it may well be inferred that he had not been then made a sharer of the ugly design set on foot for keeping a French army tethered in the enemy's presence; and those who respect his memory may hope to remain in the faith that even down to his death, he stood apart, free from the stain of having been ever initiated in any such ignoble mysteries. An abrupt disinterment of words confidentially written has indeed compelled us to see that in February—when still the 'Winter 'Troubles' were rife—General Bizot could find heart to sneer at the 'indolence' of the English, whose only real fault, as we know, was that of being so few;‡ but already we have learnt how that perilous want of numbers was masked by the noble demeanour of our suffering army, and may therefore forgive a French officer who imagined that its semblance of strength implied a power of adding

* Niel, p. 199.

† Lord Raglan to Lord Panmure, 17th April 1855.

‡ M. Rousset, vol. ii. p. 32, prints the words in which Bizot (writing to the French Minister of War) speaks of Niel's having "tried in 'vain to galvanise their indolence.'

CHAP. VII.

to its daily allotment of work. If acquainted with our dread 'Morning States,' he — a man noble-hearted and just—would never have harboured the thought which inspired his ungenerous words.

It was on the 15th of April that General Bizot died. Lord Raglan in person, together with those of his Staff who could be spared from their imperative duties, showed the feeling with which they regarded the memory of the brave Engineer by following his remains to the grave.

In command of the French Engineers General Bizot was succeeded provisionally by General Dalesme, and definitively — after an interval which lasted until the 5th of May—by General Niel, who proposed himself for the place. This last appointment, however, was not of a nature to clash with the secret, the personal services which Niel had engaged to perform.

And succeeded after an interval by Niel.

The French opening ground by mines in front of the Flagstaff Bastion;

General Bizot had scarce breathed his last, when the French carried into effect a design he had long entertained, and had long been seeking to execute.* At the close of that series of mining operations which he had devised for the purpose, they at length on the evening of Sunday the 15th brought about some convulsing explosions which opened up from below a line of volcano-like craters at a distance of less than a hundred yards from the counterscarp

* See *ante*, p. 35, an account of his earlier effort in the same direction.

of the Flagstaff Bastion, and thus formed in front of the Work a long, deep cavity, interrupted, it is true, in one place, but forming elsewhere what, if shaped by the hand of nature, might almost be called a 'ravine.'*

and there forming a 4th Parallel.

This artificial opening of the ground close in front of the Flagstaff Bastion became for the French a beginning of their 4th Parallel, and—though not until after hard struggles—they were ultimately able to establish themselves in the hollow, taking care of course also to connect it with their 3d Parallel—full 100 yards less in advance—by covered lines of way.†

Unaware of the secret resolves which were too surely baffling its efforts, the French Army taken at large might have well felt a right to exult, when two-thirds of the distance which had separated their foremost Parallel from the Flagstaff Bastion, were thus all at once overleapt by the art of the miner, and their people—with cover to shelter them—were planted at last within stone's-throw of that very counterscarp which they had hopefully begun to approach on the earliest night of the siege. But that same French Army comprised in its thousands two men who must needs have been gravely embarrassed by seeing—on the day of his death—this completion

* The incompleteness of the hollow at one spot resulted from the afterwards ascertained fact that in part of the mine some charges had failed to explode.

† In anticipation of the explosions destined, as we saw, to take effect on the 15th, the formation of these covered lines of way was begun on the night of the 11th.—Niel, p. 201.

CHAP VII.

The tendency of this successful exploit to embarrass Canrobert and Niel.

of Bizot's design; for, in faithful obedience to the 'Mission,' both Canrobert and Niel had been minded to abstain from attacking the Bastion; yet how to excuse themselves for thus hanging back when at last after six months of toil their troops were now close to the goal, and when also in that dire extremity which before we observed, the defence of the Bastion was collapsing under the fire of great guns?* The two generals, it seems, would have liked to resume their subterranean warfare against the Flagstaff Bastion;† and in such case of course their resolve to abstain from assaulting it instantly might have been palliated, or even defended by alleging a not empty reason; but from that resource, it soon proved, they were altogether cut off by their own engineering exploit; for the mighty explosions it wrought had blown away into mere chaos the useful stratum of clay which till then had always welcomed their miners, and—confronted now instead by hard rock—they could not hope to make good any further advance underground.‡

Thus for not following up the creation of his 4th Parallel to its natural conclusions General Canrobert found himself left without any more valid 'reason' than the one put forward by Niel of which we shall afterwards hear.§

When writing in 1870, General de Todleben had the 'reason' before him, but apparently did not re-

* See *ante*, p. 190. † Niel, p. 208. ‡ Ibid.

§ *Post*, pp. 201, 202. See Niel, pp. 196, 197, and his reference to passage in p. 208.

gard it as having been set up in earnest. Why—unless still intent upon mining—the French did not come on at once to storm his Flagstaff Bastion, he professed that he could not divine.* CHAP. VII.

Todleben's encroachments in front of the Central Bastion.

Passing yet further west to the front of the Central Bastion, Colonel Todleben at this time began to fasten new Works on the zone there dividing his lines from the French, doing this—at the first—by establishing lengthened chains of those greatly aggravated Rifle-pits which he has taught us to distinguish as 'lodgments'; and, as previously on Mount Inkerman, and the Victoria Ridge, so here too before the Town front, General Canrobert, it seems, showed reluctance to make any resolute stand against the offensive encroachments.†

Canrobert's unwillingness to resist them.

In professing to explain the reluctance attributed to General Canrobert, Niel, as usual, has passed by in silence that ill-omened 'Mission' of his which, we know, was the true master-key for unlocking any such secrets;‡ and instead, has given this reason to account for his Chief's state of mind:—He has explained General Canrobert's reluctance to withstand the enemy's main encroachments in this western part of the field by saying that the Malakoff had become the real object of attack, that the siege against the Town front had grown to be a task of

* Todleben, vol. ii. p. 150.

† Niel, p. 239; Rousset, ii. pp. 166, 167.

‡ See *ante*, cap. v.

CHAP. VII.

less moment, and that therefore, to grudge making sacrifices in conflicts no longer thought cardinal might not, after all, be unwise.(1)

This, however, overcome.

But whatever its cause, the French commander's reluctance to make a vigorous stand against Todleben's successive aggressions was destined, this time, to be vanquished, or perhaps one may say overruled.

The truth is that in this the 'old siege'—the siege against the Town front—a man stronger than Canrobert, and stronger than Canrobert's Emperor, was beginning to make himself felt.

Pélissier;

Pélissier, it is true, at this time commanded only a corps; but his, as it chanced, were the troops affronted, challenged, defied, by this last growth of new Russian works thrown out in advance of Sebastopol; and, although of course lawfully he was even on this his own ground a subordinate owning obedience to the acknowledged Commander-in-Chief, he still was by nature so constituted as to be in hot rage at the notion of quietly, tamely enduring the enemy's audacious encroachments. And rage with him was a power. Having great strength of will, whilst able at pleasure to arm himself—almost dramatically—with an overpowering vehemence of manner and speech, and besides, exerting his pressure on one who well knew him to be indicated by a Dormant Commission for the exercise (under certain contingencies) of even the highest command, he—

not brooking the encroachments against his own front.

after some effort apparently—got his way over Canrobert, and was either empowered or suffered to make that war against 'lodgments' of which we are going to speak.*

The anomaly thence resulting.

Thence sprang the anomaly of Frenchmen yielding tamely to pressure in that chosen part of the field where they meant the attack to be real, and asserting their strength with decisiveness on ground far away towards the west where their chief regarded the task as one of inferior moment.† What thus turned the scale against seemingly fair presumptions was—a well-known disturbant of inference—the strong, fierce will of one man.

Fights for the Cimetière Lodgments.

The 'Cimetière' chain of Lodgments was one so boldly thrown forward that from some of them the enemy commanded a near, an endangering view of the French siege-works; and Pélissier, not willing to brook so plain an affront, determined to attack them on the night of the 10th of April. His purpose being divined by the Russians (who had seen him preparing his enterprise), they resorted to a plan which apparently was based on some theory that in contests for lodgments, it is better to have to attack than it is to have to defend them. Under cover of evening, they withdrew their troops from the lodg-

* Niel, p. 203. With respect to the 'counter-guard lodgments,' my inference that Pélissier carried his point after some 'effort,' is warranted, I think, by Niel's account, pp. 239, 240, and more decisively by Rousset's, vol. ii. p. 166.

† Ibid.

CHAP. VII.

ments and prepared to ply the new occupants who might soon be there posted with a powerful fire of artillery poured out from the Central Bastion.

Between nine and ten o'clock in the evening the French, taking it for granted that a combat awaited them, advanced in some strength and planted themselves in the then empty lodgments, but were presently assailed (in accordance with their adversary's design) by a powerful artillery-fire. Under this ordeal, the French held their ground firmly during several hours, but not without suffering losses.

Then at two o'clock in the morning, the enemy made a powerful sortie, retook at once two of the lodgments, and did not give himself rest until he had recovered them all. In like manner, on the nights of the 11th and the 12th there was a taking and retaking of these pits; but on the night of the 13th, Pélissier caused them to be attacked in some force and destroyed.

Resulting, after some days, in the definitive success of the French.

Todleben's project for a new Work of counter-approach.

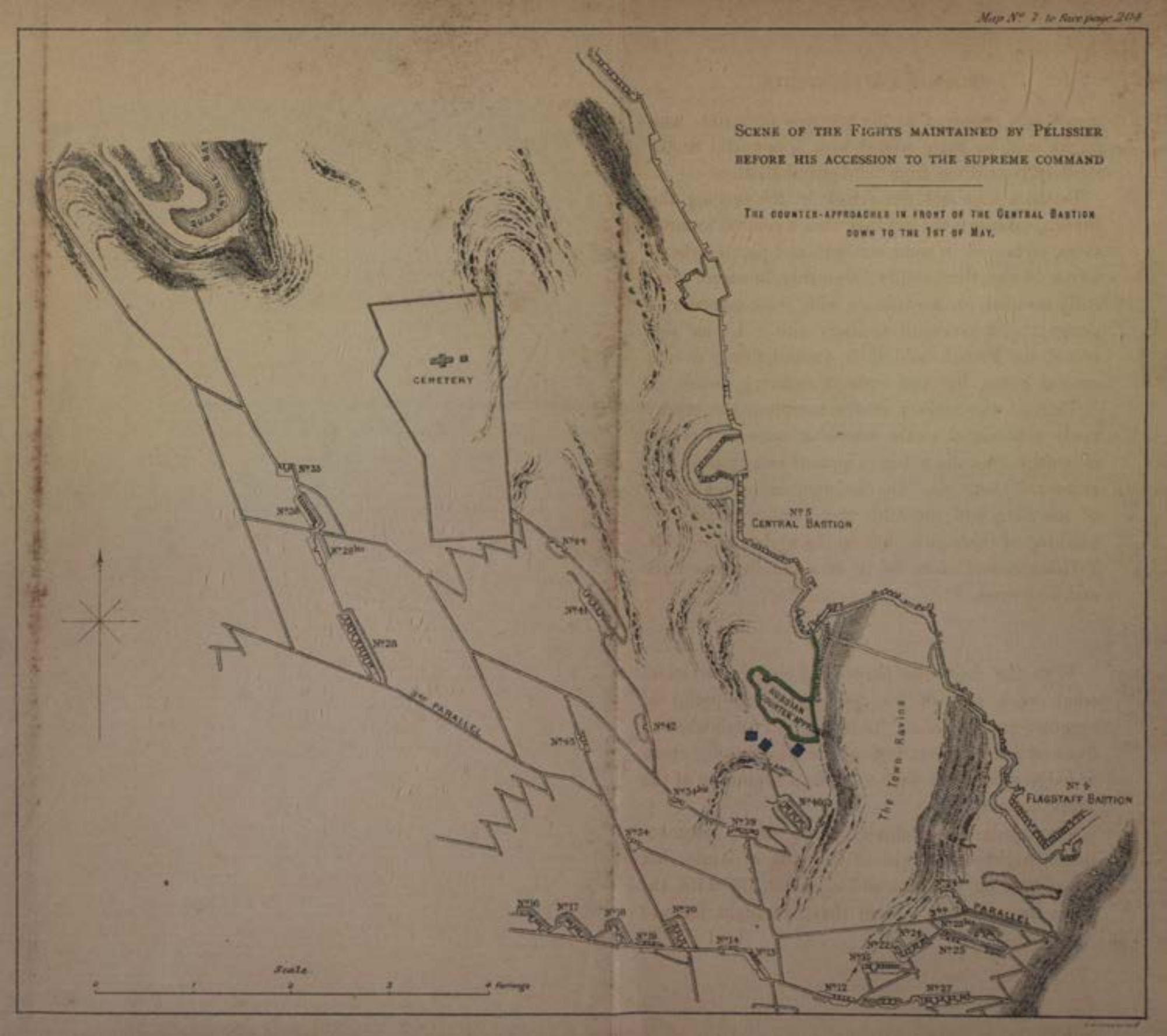
With the deliberate purpose of covering a somewhat weak part of his defences by a species of 'counter-guard,' Colonel Todleben had established in front of his Schwartz Redoubt another strong chain of lodgments which were to make a beginning of the Work designed.

The fighting for lodgments constructed in furtherance of the project.

These lodgments Pélissier seized on the last-mentioned night—the night of the 13th of April; but after dark on the 23d, and again on the 24th, the strife was renewed. From that last night forward

Scene of the Fights maintained by Pélissier before his accession to the supreme command

The counter-approaches in front of the Central Bastion down to the 1st of May.



until the close of the month, the Russians not only remained masters of the lodgments, but deliberately converted them into a new Work of counter-approach affecting the form of a redoubt, and so audaciously thrown forward as to be 141 yards in advance of the Russian line of defence and within 116 yards of the French siege-works.* Although not yet supplied with its appointed armament, this new Work—the Sousdal Counter-guard—was furnished already with nine little 6-pound mortars which, along with the fire of the riflemen, were used to annoy the French workmen who toiled in their most advanced trenches. The work was connected with the flank of the Schwartz Redoubt by a trench so placed as to be concealed from the eyes of French gunners by a fold of the ground. On the whole, this new counter-approach, if endured long enough to allow of its being completed and armed and defiantly maintained (as had been the Kamtchatka Lunette), would bring General Pélissier's corps d'armée into almost the same sort of plight as that in which we saw the French placed when fended off by new Works to a distance greater than ever from the front of the coveted Malakoff.

The Sousdal Counter-guard.

General Canrobert, we know, grudged the loss that would have to be suffered in wresting this Sousdal Counter-guard from the enemy;† but by

* Todleben does not deny that this extreme proximity to the enemy's siege-works was a defect, but says its position was dictated by the lay of the ground. The new Work was executed by troops of the Sousdal Regiment, and thence acquired its name.

† Niel, p. 239, and Rousset, vol. ii. p. 166.

CHAP. VII.

strength of will armed with overpowering vehemence Pélissier brought his Chief to consent that the attack should be made, and orders were given accordingly.*

Brilliant attack by the French on the Sousdal Counter-guard,

At half-past ten o'clock on the night of the 1st of May, a strong body of French infantry commanded by General Motterouge advanced against the Work in three columns, of which those on the right and left flanks were respectively under the orders of General de Salles and General Bazaine, whilst General Motterouge in person led forward the two battalions which formed his centre column.†

Either in or about the Work, the enemy at this time was present with no less than four battalions; but devoting his care to the task of repairing havoc done in the daytime by French artillery, he is said to have been off his guard, and to have been taken in part by surprise.‡

and capture of the Work;

Without firing a shot, the assailants made good their advance to the edge of the Work, and the centre column at once broke over its parapet intent on the use of the bayonet. Some lively fighting ensued, but did not last long. The centre column prevailing soon drove out the Russians, pursued them some way in their flight, and was master of the counter-approach including its nine little mortars.

* Niel, pp. 239, 240; Rousset, ii. p. 166.

† Niel, p. 240 *et seq.* I am unable to give the numerical strength of the columns; but they comprised, it seems, altogether two entire battalions, with besides twenty-seven companies.—Ibid.

‡ Todleben, vol. ii. p. 198.

CHAP. VII.

Then with admirable valour and skill Colonel Guérin of the French Engineers and the officers and men working under his guidance made haste to clench the victory. Reversing the parapets of the captured Work, they converted to the use of the French what so lately had sheltered the Russians, and achieved under fire the perilous and difficult task of forming (by flying sap) the gabionaded approach—full 350 yards long—that would link to their system of trenches the newly effected conquest. The conduct of the French troops, that night, was, as Lord Raglan said, 'very brilliant.' *

resulting in the complete success of the French.

The time for attacking and seizing this work of counter-approach was happily chosen; for (except as regards the small mortars) it had not as yet been armed, though its ramparts had already attained such a height and solidity that, when once in the hands of the victor, they afforded him a much-needed shelter against the fire of the place.

Losses sustained in the night combat of the 1st of May.

It was not without making sacrifices that the French achieved this conquest of what at the first had been only a chain of those aggravated Rifle-pits which Todleben used to call 'Lodgments.' In killed and wounded, they lost, it would seem, about 600 officers and men; † the Russians 425.‡

* I quote this high praise from Lord Raglan's published Despatch, May 5, 1855.

† Niel, p. 241. The numbers killed and wounded on the French Left at the time in question—*i.e.*, from the 1st to the 2d of May—is stated at 602, and it does not appear that there was any other combat that night. The French losses at the battle of the Alma were not, it seems, quite so great as those they sustained in this combat.

‡ Todleben, vol. ii. p. 199.

CHAP. VII.

Canrobert apologising for this victorious exploit.

Strange as it may seem to those who have not grasped the full bearing of General Niel's 'mission,' it is actually true that General Canrobert offered an excuse to the Home Government for this victorious exploit, as one of a kind inconsistent with 'the system of waiting'—a system which seemed to forbid all such actions; and he added that the embarrassment thus caused was 'one of the difficulties of the 'situation.' *

The Sousdal Counter-guard converted into a French Work;

On the following day, the French strengthened themselves yet further in the conquered Work, and gave it a name. They called it, 'The Work of the '2d of May'; and afterwards, at about three o'clock, they promptly repulsed a sortie which the Russians attempted against it.

and held fast.

On the night of the 13th, they repulsed a new sortie attempted against the Work, as also one made further west with a view to aid the main object by making a diversion elsewhere.

The fighting for lodgments in front of 'Gordon's 'Attack.

Pélissier had not yet opened his small, though determined campaign against the 'Counter-guard' Lodgments, when on other and distant lodgments confronting the left advanced sap of Gordon's Attack our people made an assault. Against that same part of our siege-works, and to prevent the English from seizing those very same lodgments (which our people still always called rifle-pits), the enemy had determined to make a sortie on the night of

* Rousset, vol. ii. p. 167.

the 20th of April; * but our people anticipated him by twenty-four hours; and it was at nine o'clock on the evening of the 19th of April that, commanding in person a detachment of his splendid 77th Regiment, Colonel Egerton assaulted the lodgments. He attacked them with an 'impetuosity' —Lord Raglan uses the word—which did not prevent the conflict from being severe for a time, but caused it nevertheless to be short. He promptly carried the lodgments, but suffered some loss, and Captain Lemprière of his regiment, a young, though most able officer, was one of the killed.

Egerton's achievement.

In one of the captured lodgments, our Engineers resolved to establish a lodgment of their own, and to connect it with the head of their sap. This, though only of course incompletely, they found means to do in the course of three or four hours. They determined that they would not retain the other lodgment; but some men—perhaps eight or ten—were left there on watch for the time.

At about one o'clock the Russians advanced with a whole battalion of their famous Vladimir Regiment, reinforced by some hundreds of men volunteering from its other battalions for this special service. The assailants drove in our covering sentries and the eight or ten soldiers left watching in the otherwise unoccupied lodgment.

Then advancing against the lodgment which our people had resolved to hold fast, the Russian force moved in its strength; but the English coming up

* Todleben, vol. ii. p. 162.

CHAP. VII.

in good time, soon drove back the Vladimir troops, thus defeating the enemy's efforts to reconquer what he had lost. Thenceforth accordingly the lodgment thus taken and held remained connected definitively with the siege-works of 'Gordon's Attack.'

This capture destroyed all the value of the other lodgment, which therefore was left unoccupied by the Russians as well as the English.*

But this 'brilliant achievement' — I quote the two words from Lord Raglan—was one that cost our people some lives, and—what is more—it cost them a life. Whilst forming his troops for the second of the two encounters, Colonel Egerton was killed.

His death.

In his official despatch, Lord Raglan speaks with great warmth of Colonel Egerton's services, declaring indeed that the army 'could not have sustained a 'more severe loss' than the one which his death inflicted, and that 'so it was felt in the army, and in 'the 77th where he was much beloved and was 'deeply lamented'; but in a private letter of the same date he could not help giving a further expression to his sense of Egerton's worth; saying even

His fame.

that although the achievement would, he 'doubted 'not, produce a good effect both on the enemy and 'our allies, it was dearly bought by the sacrifice of 'the life of Colonel Egerton, who was one of the 'best officers in the army, and looked up to by all.'†

* And so it remained until the morning of the 21st, when Lieutenant Walker of the 30th, moving gallantly out with a party of volunteers, completely filled in and razed it.—Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, April 24, 1855.

† Private Letter to Lord Panmure, 21st April 1855.

But more puissant than all words of praise is the memory of what Egerton did on the morning of Inkerman, where, General Buller commanding, he with less than 300 men of his glorious 77th turned back the whole tide of a battle then rolling in with the weight of Soimonoff's gathered masses.*

The praises bestowed by Lord Raglan on the troops taking part in this combat.

It happened that, in proportion to the strength of the rank and file, a somewhat large number of officers were present in these fights for the lodgment, and I observe that the conduct of eight of them won the high approval of Lord Raglan.†

Lord Raglan reported the conduct of the troops to have been admirable.

The losses it caused our people.

In killed and wounded, all reckoned, the losses were, it seems, sixty-eight. ‡

The night sorties during this period.

In the course of this period the sorties—made always at night—against the French and the English trenches, were efforts of a determined kind, but

* His exact strength was 259. See cap. vi. sec. xvi. of Inkerman volume, p. 148 *et seq.* of 1st (Octavo) Edition, vol. vi. of Cabinet Edition, p. 127 *et seq.* It will be seen that the gallant young Lemprière, struck down on this 19th of April, was one of the officers present under Egerton at Inkerman.

† Namely, besides Colonel Egerton and Captain Lemprière, both killed, General Lockyer (general officer of the trenches in the Right Attack), Colonel Mundy of the 33d (who succeeded Egerton in the command of the force), Colonel Tylden, Captain Owen, and Lieutenant Baynes, all three of the Engineers, and Captain Gwilt of the 34th Regiment. The same despatch mentioned Captain King of the Engineers in words of high praise, but for services rendered before the 19th. He had been wounded on the 17th.

‡ Journal of Royal Engineers, vol. ii. p. 158. The amount of the Russian loss is not given.

CHAP. VII.

after more or less fighting, were all of them duly repulsed without having done any harm great enough to be specially memorable. The real advantage achieved by these petty enterprises was of a general —not special—kind. They kept the besiegers on the alert, and made it their duty to go on unceasingly with the always harassing task committed to their 'guards of the trenches.'

These night sorties against the English trenches took place sometimes under conditions which gave our people occasion for showing their superb fighting qualities, and winning the gracious approval of Lord Raglan—a commander so just and so generous, that he did not like his praise to be stinted by the smallness or obscurity of the arena in which his officers and men might be often disclosing their prowess. There for instance was heart in his tone when, to take but one sample, he told the Home Government that a determined sortie had been 'most nobly met 'and repulsed.'*

A reconnaissance by Omar Pasha;

Omar Pasha, one day, from his camp in the plain of Balaclava, effected a little reconnaissance to the left bank of the Tchernaya. This I mention because

* See his published Despatches on the sorties of the nights of the 5th, 9th, and 11th of May.—Sayer's Collection, pp. 158, 160, 161. In these Lord Raglan accords high praise to the troops, and—by name—to Captain Williamson and Lieutenant Gubbins of the 30th, Lieutenant Rochfort of the 49th, Colonel Trollope, Lieutenant-Colonel Mundy, Captain Turner of the Royal Fusiliers, Captain Jordan of the 34th, and Captain Edwards of the 68th, killed.

the battalions composing his principal force were flanked on their left by some cavalry, and field-batteries, which with excellent courtesy the French and the English Commanders had placed—for once—under the guidance of a Turkish and Mussulman Pasha.

Why recorded.

Towards the end of the month of April, the task of laying down a submarine telegraph cable connecting the Chersonese with Varna was brought to completion; and so early as the 2d of May the arrangements for intercommunication were perfected. Thenceforth a few hours sufficed for the passage of messages flying from either Paris or London to the camps in front of Sebastopol.

Submarine telegraph connecting the Chersonese with Varna.

This facility of communication, however, was not an unmixed advantage; and perhaps indeed many of those who will see its effects as experienced in the night of the 3d of May will impatiently say that the change was rather a curse than a blessing.*

Its counterbalancing mischiefs.

There also was laid down a cable which connected the Chersonese with Eupatoria.

The Eupatoria cable.

Lord Raglan towards the close of this period was happily strengthened in numbers by a large and welcome accession of troops placed under his orders.

The accession of 15,000 Sardinian troops under General de la Marmora.

The King of Sardinia had so aimed his exalted

* See *post*, p. 257 *et seq.*

CHAP. VII.

ambition as to make the cause of Italy his own, and his counsels at this time were guided by a Minister of rare sagacity, who perceived that an object so great, yet also so perturbing to Europe, was one wholly out of the reach of common, hand-to-mouth statesmanship, and could only be accomplished, if ever accomplished at all, by what, as distinguished from 'statesmanship,' may perhaps be called far-sighted statecraft. When England and France had taken up arms against Russia, Count Cavour—with some aid, it would seem, from the clear-seeing mind of a woman*—made bold to adopt a policy which appeared at first sight highly venturesome, and by many perhaps would be treated as somewhat unscrupulous; (2) but, so far as concerned its policy, he at least knew how to support it by a fair show of reasoning. He argued that sooner or later, the war, as matter of course, would be followed by a treating for peace in which the belligerents, all of them, would naturally have to take part, and that therefore, if the King of Sardinia were simply to take the step of declaring war against Nicholas, he too (by his Minister) would be necessarily present in Congress, and there by mere utterance of the name of 'Italy' might already be advancing her cause; whilst also, if furnishing troops to fight side by side with those of the Western Powers, he might earn a clear right to have their goodwill, and deserve it

* Cavour's niece, the Countess Alfieri. I owe my knowledge of this to Mr Hayward. See in his Biographical Essays, the one on Count Cavour.

indeed all the more, since he had not himself any grievance, or ground of complaint against Russia.

Thus it happened that on the 8th of May General de la Marmora, with a part of the 15,000 Sardinian troops despatched to the seat of war, and followed by the rest of the force, was already landing at Balaclava, and placing himself, as agreed, at the English Commander's disposal.

Words other than mine will commemorate the battle of the Tchernaya, and the part there victoriously taken by General de la Marmora at the head of his Sardinian army; but without breaking loose from that tether which confines me within the period ended on the 28th of June, I can say that, whilst Lord Raglan lived, his relations with the welcome allies thus joining their strength to his own were always thoroughly cordial.(3)

CHAPTER VIII.

TROUBLED COUNSELS OF THE FRENCH.

I.

CHAP. VIII.

THE work of destruction effected in the two White Redoubts, in the Kamtchatka Lunette, and above all, in the clusters of batteries which included the Flagstaff Bastion, must needs have been partly descried, and partly also inferred by many of the artillerymen busied in the French advanced batteries;* but, supposing him to have bestowed little care on their necessarily piecemeal accounts, it was possible for General Canrobert to be far from completely aware of the havoc his siege-guns had wrought; and indeed, if well knowing the whole, or even one-half of the truth, he must have found himself strangely embarrassed by the exigencies of his Emperor's plot; since, to own that the April Bombardment had opened fit paths for assault, would be almost the same as acknowledging that sound warlike counsels demanded those very exer-

Tendency of a successful bombardment to derange the working of Niel's 'mission.'

* For the extent of that work of destruction, see *ante*, pp. 184-186.

tions of force which the ill-omened 'Mission' forbade. CHAP. VIII.

Be all this as it may, General Canrobert ignored from the first, and persistently went on ignoring the effects of his own cannonade. Canrobert ignoring the success of the bombardment.

So early as the 10th of April (which was only the second day of the bombardment, and one on which the defence of Sebastopol was languishing for want of ammunition, and whilst also the White Redoubts and the Flagstaff Bastion were falling into that state of utter helplessness which they reached before sunset) General Canrobert intimated to Lord Raglan that he did not much expect the bombardment to produce a successful result; * and on the same day, he addressed to his Emperor this very significant letter:—'If the superiority of our fire is not com-
'pletely established (which we shall know to-morrow)
'we shall diminish it, and if necessary, stop it alto-
'gether, keeping ourselves in readiness against any
'attack by the relieving army. If this attack (de-
'sired with so much reason) does not take place,
'we (though harassing the enemy meanwhile to the
'best of our power) shall await the arrival of your
'Majesty's Army of Reserve, convinced in such case
'that upon the action of that Reserve army will
'depend the fate of Sebastopol.' †

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, April 14, 1855.

† Rousset, ii. p. 147.

CHAP. VIII.

II.

Conference of 14th April.

On the 14th of April—a day when the Flagstaff Bastion, as we saw, was in desperate plight—there took place a conference at which (besides the principal French and English Artillery and Engineer officers) there were present General Canrobert, General Pélissier, General Bosquet, Omar Pasha, Sir Edmund Lyons, Sir George Brown, and Lord Raglan.* The Conference lasted more than four hours, and all agreed that an immediate assault ought not to be attempted. (1)

Disposition on the part of the French, except Pélissier, to stop the bombardment;

The French (excepting Pélissier, who advised going on with the siege) were at first for arresting the bombardment, if not indeed even for stopping all other aggressive proceedings until the place should be invested. Then Canrobert, Lord Raglan, Omar Pasha, and Sir Edmund Lyons retired into another room, and it appeared that Canrobert was for maintaining the 'status quo'; but ultimately, though with no little difficulty, Lord Raglan—greatly aided by Sir Edmund Lyons—prevailed upon Canrobert to agree that the bombardment should be continued, though with diminished fire, in order that the ammunition might last the longer.†

but successfully combated by Lord Raglan and Lyons.

A slight relaxation of the fet-

General Canrobert at this time obtained what might seem at first glance like some small, very

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, April 14, 1855.

† Lord Raglan to Lord Panmure, private letter, 14th April 1855, and same (Secret) to Secretary of State, 17th April 1855.

CHAP. VIII.

ters imposed on Canrobert by Niel's 'mission.'

small relaxation of the miserable fetters he wore in obedience to General Niel's 'mission.' Whilst confronting at close quarters a powerful enemy, and having encamped at his side an unsuspecting ally kept in ignorance of the all-ruling 'mission,' he had patiently held the command during several weeks of what I called 'an army in waiting'; and against the strange lot cast upon him, his pride, it seems, had not rebelled. But when the time for a great artillery effort drew nigh, the French Emperor dimly perceived that he had been placing his army in a predicament which might prove under certain conditions to be one of an odious sort, and well calculated, if the truth should leak out, to bring his name into disgrace. If indeed the bombardment should produce good and wholesome results, yet not of a kind so conspicuous as to be appreciable by all observers, its success might be ignored, concealed, and denied; but what if its destructive power should prove overwhelming? If Sebastopol should seem to be lying at the mercy of a French army, was Canrobert still to be hindered from laying his hand on the prize by the exigencies of the Imperial mission? Plainly under the stress of such thoughts, yet clinging still to a hope that both the French army on the Chersonese, and the Army of Reserve at Constantinople might be kept in unimpaired force to await his good pleasure, he did, as too often men must, when torn by conflicting motives. He tried, as well as he could, to give some effect more or less to each of the opposing forces which strove for the mastery of his

CHAP. VIII.

will; and at last, whilst announcing that he would have 40,000 men at Constantinople before the end of the month;* he yet did not grant the general leave to move any part of that force, save only in the desperate conjuncture of its proving to be peremptorily needed for the safety of his army.† And, after thus perversely continuing the disjoinder of his forces in the East, the Emperor ended by giving to General Canrobert this miserable instruction: 'Do 'what you can, but do not compromise yourself.'‡

The miserable instruction given to Canrobert by his Emperor.

With the slight, very slight relaxation of the rules of Niel's mission which this letter granted it also kept in force so much of the old restraint that General Canrobert, it would seem, suffered tortures. There were times when he thought himself capable of directing that an assault should take place within perhaps less than a week, but none that found him inclined to take such a step the same day, or even so soon as the morrow; and one who has had access to his correspondence with the Emperor and the War Minister describes him as a man who between the conflicting ideas was 'painfully oscillating.'§ Niel —never forgetting his 'mission'—stood over the

Canrobert's state of mind.

The conduct and bearing of Niel.

* Letter from Emperor to Canrobert, partly read out by him to Lord Raglan. Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, 17th April 1855. The letter, or at all events the part of it read out to Lord Raglan, did not say what use was to be made of the 40,000 men.

† Lord Raglan (after hearing this from Canrobert) to the Secretary of State, Secret, 14th April 1855, and again (there stating the exception above shown) same to same, Secret, 24th April 1855.

‡ Canrobert on the 16th of April read out to Lord Raglan the passage of a letter he had received from the Emperor which contained those words. Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, 17th April 1855.

§ Rousset, pp. 146, 147.

Commander-in-Chief with a will to denounce every notion that Canrobert might venture to harbour of assaulting Sebastopol, and the Imperial aide-de-camp thus superintending the general mingled even some scorn with his use of the curb; for he did not so much as believe that any design of assaulting would last until the cardinal moment for turning resolve into action.*

His letter of the 16th of April to the Minister of War

On the 16th, General Niel seems to have been displeased with Canrobert for not acting with more steadfast deference to the precepts of the 'Mission,' and apparently for even allowing the growth of consultations with reasoners who harboured the thought of assault; for he thus wrote to the Minister of War:—'I am going to try to turn the minds 'of the commanders from an attempt no less dan- 'gerous than useless, which I hope will be aban- 'doned. . . . I did not advise engaging in this 'artillery conflict; for I had, and still hold the con- 'viction that, even if it had proved more success- 'ful than it has, there still would not have been 'an assault driven into the town.'† Incredible, as it would seem, if not proved, this Aide-de-camp superintendent established at the French Head-quarters made bold to reprove the Minister of War for not having lectured the unfortunate Canrobert, and thus kept him in more close obedience to the commands of the 'Mission.' 'I must regret, 'M. le Maréchal, that you did not speak to the

* See *post*, p. 224, his letter to the Emperor of the 17th April 1855.

† Rousset, ii. p. 145.

CHAP. VIII.

'Commander-in-Chief about the conduct of the 'siege. From the accounts furnished to you, you 'know pretty well what Sebastopol is, and besides, 'being close to the Emperor, you know many things 'that are not known here. I am convinced that if 'you had written in the sense in which I spoke, a 'great deal of faltering would have been avoided.' *

It was on the 16th of April that Lord Raglan received his first knowledge of what I have called the 'miserable instruction'; † and thenceforth he of course understood that the French Commander associated with him in the enterprise against Sebastopol was not at the time a free agent; but one must not be led to infer that an end was thus put to the secrecy which had shrouded the 'Mission' of Niel. Nothing short of the fall of the 'Empire' with other favouring circumstances sufficed to lay bare the truth, and show how the 'Mission' of Niel had been secretly taking effect from the time of his arrival in January to the mid-April period now reached.

No termination of the secrecy which had shrouded Niel's 'mission.'

On the 16th of April (after a preliminary discussion between the chief Engineer and Artillery officers of the allied armies), the three commanders met in conference determined that the contemplated assault should be delayed for some days (not saying how many), in order to give time for the construction of certain additional works; and they also put off their decision respecting what should be done against the Kamtchatka Lunette as well as

16th April. Agreement made between Canrobert and Lord Raglan;

* Rousset, ii. pp. 145, 146.

† See *ante*, p. 220, and footnote.

against the place generally; but they agreed that an attack in one quarter should be made by a joint use of forces, French, English, and Ottoman. They resolved that, upon orders to that effect being given, the White Redoubts should be seized by troops to be drawn for the purpose from each of the three allied armies.*

but abandoned three days afterwards by Canrobert.

Three days afterwards, however, Lord Raglan, when reminding his colleague of the agreement, found Canrobert appearing to think that the capture of those works, after all, 'would not be 'attended with any important advantage';† and accordingly the project was dropped.

17th April. Letter from Niel to the Emperor.

On the 17th of April—the morrow of a day when the Flagstaff Bastion had been brought to a state of miserable wreck—Niel wrote direct to the Emperor:—

'Sire, our artillery has not obtained great results. 'Every morning the Place resumes its fire, and each 'embrasure has its gun in a state for firing. The 'English little frightened at having to pass over 600 'mètres of ground before getting from their parallel 'to the Redan had declared that they were ready to 'assault; but since, reflections have come, and yes-'terday evening, the three commanders determined 'that they would prolong and diminish their fire 'without stopping it. Sire, it is with lively regret

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, April 17, 1855.

† This was on the 19th. Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, 21st April 1855.

CHAP. VIII.

'that I see the confirmation of what I have always 'thought: the assault is so difficult, so dangerous 'for the army that when the moment comes, people 'shrink from before it. The truth is that in this '(so-called) siege, people aim at an object which 'they yet do not venture to grasp when they closely 'approach it, that there is no solution but in the 'investment of the Place after having beaten the 'enemy, and that consequently it is necessary to 'hasten as much as possible the arrival of the Army 'of Reserve which your Majesty is forming at Con-'stantinople.' *

III.

Ebullition of warlike impatience on the part of the French army.

When the Flagstaff Bastion, on the evening of the 21st of April, had been not only silenced and brought to ruin by overwhelming fire, but also laid under the pressure of a 4th Parallel then newly opened against it at less than a hundred yards' distance, the French army hitherto patient could no longer be prevented from judging that the time for final action was ripe; and in the course of the following day a great weight of opinion pronounced that the enemy's shattered defences were meet to be carried by storm.

Canrobert either sharing the feeling or hurried along by it.

Whether hurried along by this feeling, or—for the moment—advisedly sharing it, General Canrobert took strides on the road which seemed leading to resolute action.

Niel.

But Niel? Ruled alike by the exigencies of

* Rousset, ii. p. 146.

his 'Mission,' and by the strength of his convictions, he could hardly have relaxed his desire that the prudently guided Allies should adventure no assault of Sebastopol without first investing the place; and, if he did not stamp out the notion of prompt appeals to the bayonet by a peremptory use of his delegate power, nay even appeared for some hours to approve a resort to such measures, he has left behind him a clue from which one perhaps may infer that without foregoing his object he only changed his means of obtaining it. He believed that, though determined beforehand to assault the Redan, Lord Raglan, when it came to the point, would never send forward his columns of infantry across the breadth of interposed ground — which divided the goal set before them from their most advanced parallel;* and accordingly, he was free to imagine that his long-pursued task of preventing assaults might be, this time, performed by the English. Let the French with apparent decisiveness propose a general assault. The English, thus brought to the point, would refuse, he imagined, to march against the distant Redan. Their refusal would at once put an end to the whole project, and on them—not the French or their Emperor—would fall the whole anger of those who were yearning for an assault of Sebastopol.

23d April. The French ostensibly ready to assault.

It was with a purpose made to seem firmly settled that the French on Monday the 23d of April began to concert fitting measures for a general assault. At

* See *ante*, p. 223. Niel's Letter of the 17th of April to the Emperor.

CHAP. VIII.

Preliminary conference.

a conference held in the morning, the chief Engineer and Artillery officers of the French and English armies declared their opinion in writing—a writing drawn up by Niel himself—and advised that, unless the investment of Sebastopol should be effected within ten days, the place should be assaulted.*

Evening of the 23d.

In the evening, General Canrobert came to Lord Raglan's quarters, bringing with him, as it seemed, bold resolves. He proposed that the Allies should assault Sebastopol; and to this Lord Raglan agreed. After a discussion which lasted two hours, General Canrobert and Lord Raglan arranged that the fire which had been slack for some days should be resumed on the 26th, and that after this fire should have been kept up for two days and a half, advances should be made against the place in such manner as should be thought most desirable.†

Agreement between Canrobert and Lord Raglan for a general assault of Sebastopol.

On the ground, as he wrote, that 'General Canrobert and the greater portion of the French superior officers had hitherto shown such unwillingness to undertake anything that might involve serious risk,' and that 'the General-in-Chief had always previously manifested a disposition to pursue a very cautious course,' and had been 'warned by the Emperor not to commit himself,' Lord Raglan was greatly surprised at the apparently sudden conversion of his French allies to the policy of undertaking assaults, but—at first—he did not doubt their sin-

Lord Raglan's impression.

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, April 24th, 1855. Rousset, ii. p. 154.

† Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, April 24th, 1855.

cerity;* and accordingly addressed his Government in terms well befitting what seemed to be a grave conjuncture.†

IV.

Not many hours had passed, when Lord Raglan perceived, as he thought, that under this new resolve to assault Sebastopol, General Canrobert did not feel 'comfortable';‡ and how well he divined the truth we are able to see; for on the very morrow of the agreement made with Lord Raglan in the evening of the 23d, General Canrobert was writing to the Emperor in terms which not only declared the assault he had proposed on the previous evening to be a hazardous measure, but even shadowed out an intention—then already appearing half formed—to abandon the accepted agreement, and supplant it by other designs. Niel also wrote to his sovereign by the same mail, and the Emperor thus cites the two letters:—'A letter from General Canrobert of the '24th of April, and another from General Niel an-'nounce to me that in accord with Lord Raglan 'they have decided that the assault should be de-'livered on the 28th or 29th of April, that the 'enterprise is hazardous, and that perhaps they will

General Canrobert's apparently uneasy state.

His letter next day (24th April) to the Emperor.

Niel writing to the Emperor at the same time.

The Emperor's account of the two letters.

* This is shown, I think, by his surmises as to the cause of their being determined (as he then thought they were) to undertake an assault.

† Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, April 24th, 1855. In quoting some words from the despatch, I have corrected what seemed to me a clerical error by substituting 'involve' for 'incur.'

‡ Ibid.

CHAP. VIII.

'make up their minds to attack the enemy* and to 'invest the place, if the army of reserve receives 'orders to proceed to the Crimea. I received these 'two letters on the 5th of May.'† . . . 'Canrobert 'himself says that on the 24th the situation was so 'strained that it could not last more than fifteen 'days.'‡

With his mind in the state thus disclosed, General Canrobert might perhaps be expected to appreciate a newly found reason for abandoning the warlike agreement he had made on the previous day, and this he accordingly did—did even within a few hours.

Morning of 25th. Canrobert resolved to put off the assault;

On the morning of the 25th, Niel came to the English Headquarters, bringing with him a letter—a letter not very new (dated Paris, the 7th of April) from the Minister of Marine to Admiral Bruat—which intimated that the French Reserve troops at Constantinople would be ready to embark for the theatre of war on the 10th of May. This letter Niel read to Lord Raglan, and he founded upon it a conclusion which already, he showed, had been reached with unanimity by General Canrobert and all the French Generals assembled to give him counsel—a conclusion pronouncing it 'desirable to postpone the 'offensive operations against Sebastopol.' He urged that, although inconvenient, delay was 'preferable 'to the immediate adoption of a course which would

The interview between Niel and Lord Raglan.

* Some such words as 'in the field,' or 'on the north side,' appear to be wanting; but, if the sentence be without them imperfect, it can hardly be called obscure.

† The Emperor of the French to Lord Cowley, dated Palace of the Tuileries, 7th May 1855.

‡ Ibid.

'be attended with great risk and could be pursued 'under altered circumstances with better chances of 'success.'* 'Niel,' continued Lord Raglan, 'made 'some rather curious admissions. He avowed that 'he had been strongly opposed to the reopening of 'the batteries of the Allies, and that he held to the 'opinion he had originally formed that an assault 'could not be successful, and yet he had been con-'stantly urging General Rose to press upon me the 'necessity of resuming the fire, and he drew the 'Paper of the 23d already before your Lordship 'which contained the recommendation of the Artil-'lery and Engineer officers that an attack should 'be made upon the place after an active bombard-'ment of forty-eight hours. I ventured to point this 'out to him, and he fully acknowledged that I was 'right, but he observed :—"I am not the Command-'er-in-Chief."' †

Course taken by Lord Raglan.

Lord Raglan of course could not baffle a scheme of postponement demanded by the unanimous authority of the assembled French generals; but, after all that had passed, he thought himself entitled to require that the proposal to put off the assault should be in writing. Niel judged the demand to be reasonable; and accordingly on the same day General Canrobert addressed to Lord Raglan a letter fulfilling the purpose. After saying that all had been prepared for the delivery of a general assault on about the 28th of April, he wrote:—'To-day, I communicated to

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, 28th April 1855.

† Ibid. I translate the last words from the original French in which Lord Raglan gives them.

CHAP. VIII.

25th April. Canrobert's letter putting off the attack.

'the generals commanding the two Army Corps and 'the Engineers and Artillery of the French army 'an official despatch announcing that the Corps of 'Reserve forming at Constantinople will be ready to 'commence operations on the 10th of May next. In 'the face of this communication, and seeing the 'possible consequences of a general assault beset by 'the most difficult circumstances that can take place 'in war—circumstances that might compromise the 'two allied armies, and the future of the great 'interests which they defend, the conference unan-'imously expressed the opinion that it was fitting 'to wait for the commencement of operations by the 'Corps of Reserve. I submit to your Lordship this 'opinion which seems to be inspired by considerations 'of a value that will not escape you, and to which I 'think you will be willing to give your approval.'

Lord Raglan's observation on the French change of counsel.

'What surprises me,' writes Lord Raglan, 'is that, 'the proposition of the assault having emanated from 'the French on the 23d, they should all have been 'opposed to the proceeding on the 25th.'

The letter of the 7th of April, from the French Minister of Marine, which General Niel brought to Lord Raglan on this Wednesday the 25th had seemingly reached Admiral Bruat in the course of the previous week;* and on the 24th, in the presence of both Canrobert and the English Commander, the admiral had stated its purport;† yet no one then

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, 28th April 1855. 'Must' have done so is what Lord Raglan says.

† Ibid.

CHAP. VIII.

broached the idea of making it serve as a ground for putting off the assault.* Nor indeed can one say that this rudely disturbing idea would have ever been broached at all, if Lord Raglan (instead of consenting) had justified the calculations of Niel by declining to assault the Redan.†

Circumstances under which the letter to Bruat was put forward.

When Canrobert (having found that the English were ready to take part in the assault) fell afterwards into the state of unhopefulness, and doubt, and anxiety disclosed by his plaint to the Emperor, he of course became ripe for that logic which drew from the letter to Bruat a reason for stopping the enterprise; but a general who, ever since February, had been suffering the audacious garrison to defy him with its counter-approaches, and had thrown away every occasion for seizing the Flagstaff Bastion could hardly bespeak from our people a welcome for any discovery which only furnished new reasons for not yet assaulting Sebastopol.

Still, what men in dispute call 'an afterthought' is not of necessity worthless; and in fairness it ought to be said that on this 25th of April, the opportunities offered by the bombardment had already been lost;‡ so that then there were not those sharp reasons for prompt appeal to the bayonet which we

* This clearly results from the 2d paragraph of the last above-cited despatch.

† With respect to Niel's idea that the English on reflection would not undertake a task so desperate as the assault of the Redan, see *ante*, his letter of the 17th of April.

‡ The general bombardment had ceased on the 18th, and the fire directed specially against the Flagstaff Bastion had not lasted beyond the 22d.

CHAP. VIII.

saw had been pressing enough on many of the earlier days. Perhaps therefore, if men had been free from the anger provoked at the time by Canrobert's numberless falterings, they might hardly have refused to acknowledge that, whilst having before him the prospect spread out to his sight by the letter of the 7th of April, the French Commander was justified in resolving to wait for the co-operation of the Corps of Reserve before venturing to undertake such a measure as the general assault of Sebastopol.

Weight due to the letter of the 7th of April.

V.

The previous concealment from Canrobert.

But supposing this conclusion accepted, and accordingly agreeing with Canrobert that a vitally momentous decision was rightly averted by the letter of the 7th of April, it seems wondrous that he of all men should have long been excluded from that very parcel of knowledge which was held (when discovered at last) to afford the sure clue for his guidance, and left to find it out accidentally, after many a day, from a letter which Admiral Bruat had for some other purpose adduced.

The truth is that on the subject of his Corps of Reserve the French Emperor had been maintaining from the first a system of almost childish concealment against his own general Canrobert;* though perhaps it was mainly from sloth, or from want of

* As well showed by Marshal Vaillant's mysterious letter to Canrobert. Rousset, ii. p. 35, and quoted *post*, in the next page. 'Le général Canrobert lui-même n'en devait rien apprendre.' These words are

comprehensive brain-power that he let concealment run on to its more extravagant lengths. That his admirably organised Ministry of War failed to save him from so huge a default, is not perhaps very wonderful; since plainly his interposition, being fitful, ill-conceived, and mysterious, must have tended to hamper its clock-work. 'The Emperor' writes Vaillant to Canrobert 'chooses to have his 'Army of Reserve in hand; I cannot better explain myself.'* When absolute concealment from Canrobert of what thousands were partially knowing had become impossible, the Emperor still went on concealing from him as much as he could—concealing from him, for instance, the aim with which a French Army had been gathered on the shores of the Bosphorus.

This discrediting collapse of an enterprise which had quickened the pulse of three armies would have all been escaped, if the Emperor, or the Emperor's Government, proceeding in a straight course of action, had simply kept Canrobert's knowledge abreast of that furnished to Bruat; for the outburst of warlike impatience which provoked strong resolves on the Monday would have plainly been calmed on the Saturday or the Sunday before, by assigning that ground for delay which was afterwards declared to be cogent by all the assembled French generals.

given by Rousset authoritatively because he had had access to the secret papers of the War Department. Vol. ii. p. 35.

* Ibid.

VI.

Uncertainty as to the duration of the postponement.

How long this postponement of the assault might continue no one then could divine. The letter from the Minister of Marine to Admiral Bruat showed indeed that (as judged by its writer) the Corps of Reserve would be ready to take ship at Constantinople on the 10th of May; but whither it was to be borne when embarked, and when, and where, and how it was to be brought into real co-operation with Canrobert's army no men in the Crimea yet knew. If falling into accordance with the design of Niel and his Emperor, the postponement would be one carried on to that fondly imagined time when, after a brilliant campaign that was not to be even commenced until some—as yet—unknown period, Sebastopol would be on all sides invested.

Canrobert's idea of its scope.

Nor indeed was a general assault the only measure postponed until that imagined time. General Canrobert desired that meanwhile, the Allies should even abstain from the easier, the narrower task of storming the outworks thrown out in advance of the fortress; and accordingly, when on the 30th, Lord Raglan proposed to Canrobert an assault on the counter-approaches, he encountered a decisive refusal.*

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, May 5, 1855. Experience soon afterwards proved the wisdom of Lord Raglan's proposal.

CHAP. VIII.

The old fetters re-fastened upon him.

It was thus that after an interval of seeming freedom which lasted some forty-eight hours, General Canrobert once more submitted to have refastened upon him the whole suit of long-worn fetters with which Niel's 'Mission' had loaded him.

We are beginning to see something now of war business superintended by the Emperor Louis Napoleon. It was this same weak, meddlesome hand still playing with the same State machinery, that afterwards in the fulness of time brought cruel disasters on France.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NOW ACTIVELY PERTURBING INTERFERENCE OF LOUIS NAPOLEON IN THE WAR FOR SEBASTOPOL.

I.

CHAP. IX.

The hitherto paralysing interference of the French Emperor

How oppressively Louis Napoleon had been weighing on the allied armies from February to the close of April, we have well enough seen; but (with the idea of suspending decisive action until after his arrival) he had been hitherto only preventing—not ordering—any attacks. When, however, the 3d of May came, General Canrobert found himself placed under more perturbing instructions. He learned that his Emperor—this nearly a fortnight before—had entered upon the system of driving him into warlike activity by orders sent from afar—from indeed—of all the places on earth!—Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace.

now changed into actively perturbing dictation.

His visit to England.

At a time in the middle of April when still the bombardment was raging, when it seemed that the war was fast entering upon a critical phase, and when also the advance of the spring was inviting to enterprise, the French Emperor with his beauteous

Empress paid a visit to England ; * and alike by the Queen, by the Government, by the people at large, was received with a genial welcome—a welcome all the more animated, since he came with a warlike intent—with intent to form and execute plans for compassing the fall of Sebastopol. He had with him Marshal Vaillant, his Minister of War.

The Council of War at Windsor Castle.

The first Council of War (if so one may call such a conclave) was held at Windsor Castle, and there were present the Emperor, Prince Albert, Lord Clarendon, Lord Palmerston, Lord Cowley, Lord Panmure, Sir John Burgoyne, Marshal Vaillant, and Count Walewski. The Emperor at this meeting was pressed to abandon his project of going out to the Crimea, but without being then at all shaken in what seemed his steadfast resolve ; and he not only gave his opinion on the prospects of the Sebastopol siege, and the principle which should rule future action, but also went on to disclose the plan of campaign he had formed.

The Emperor's resolve to join his army.

His agreement with our Government upon preliminary questions.

With his consciousness of all he had done towards arresting (through General Niel's 'mission') the genuine advance of the siege, the French Emperor of course had some grounds on which to found a prophecy that the then still raging bombardment would fail in its object; and he found our Government ready to avow the same faith, as also to accept his theory that Sebastopol could not be taken without first investing the place.

* He came on Monday, the 16th of April.

CHAP. IX.

II.

The preliminary arrangements on which the Emperor proposed to base his plan of campaign were framed in a spirit appreciative of both our army and its chief; for Lord Raglan with his whole English force, and a largely extended command over the troops of other nations was to be withdrawn from the tedious labours of the siege, and entrusted with the more brilliant service of opening a campaign in the field.

The Emperor's proposals.

With an understanding that Eupatoria should be held by 30,000 Turks under Omar Pasha, the Emperor proposed that the forces to be engaged against Sebastopol should be divided into three armies: One of these armies charged with the task of holding the trenches and guarding the siege material as well as the ports of supply was to have a strength of 60,000, consisting of 30,000 French, with besides a like number of Turks, and to be commanded by General Canrobert.

The other two armies were to be called respectively 'the 1st,' and 'the 2d army of operation.'

The '1st army of operation' was to act in the open field with the 25,000 infantry (supported by our cavalry and artillery) which constituted the English force, but with also a body of 5000 French troops; with besides, the 15,000 men of the Sardinian contingent, and moreover—so it was hoped—with as many as 10,000 Turks, the whole numbering not less at the least than 45,000 men (with

perhaps indeed 10,000 more), and to be commanded by Lord Raglan.

The '2d army of operation'—called afterwards by Louis Napoleon 'the army of Diversion'—was to consist of 45,000 French troops withdrawn from before Sebastopol, and of the 25,000 men—also French—assembling in reserve at Constantinople, in all 70,000 * men, under the personal command of the Emperor or such person as he might appoint.

Acceptance by our Government of the preliminary arrangements;

So far, our Government approved the suggested arrangements; and accordingly, after another Council of War assembled at Buckingham Palace (at which were present the Queen, the Emperor, Prince Albert, Marshal Vaillant, Lord Palmerston, Lord Clarendon, and Lord Panmure), there was framed a Memorandum recording the agreement thus reached. Lord Panmure duly signed the agreement by command of the Queen, and Marshal Vaillant by command of the Emperor.

as recorded at Buckingham Palace.

III.

The Emperor's plan of campaign: his plan as regarded the '1st army of operation.'

For the conduct of the field operations, the Emperor's proposals were these:—He proposed that Lord Raglan, at the head of the '1st army of operation, 'should move forward across the Tchernaya, and, 'first of all, take and occupy the high ground above 'Inkerman, including Mackenzie's farm.' † Not

* Put in subsequent expositions at 65,000.

† So understood at the time by our War Minister. Lord Panmure to Lord Raglan, Private, 20th April 1855.

CHAP. IX.

That not objected to by our Government.

aware that those Heights were by many deemed all but impregnable, our Government seemed to approve, and at all events, expressed no dislike of this part of the plan; (1) but did not of course prematurely, and without consulting Lord Raglan, send out any peremptory orders for carrying it into effect.

With respect to the task reserved for his 'army 'of Diversion,' the Emperor's project was this:—By the marching of the 45,000 French troops withdrawn from before Sebastopol over a distance of some 70 miles, and the arrival of the steamers from the Bosphorus with the reserve force of 25,000, his army of 70,000 men was to be gathered at and near the distant port of Aloushta, on the south-east coast of the Crimea, was thence to reconnoitre the ground, was (if then the advance should seem feasible) to ascend from the shore to the mountains, to move up and over the shoulder of the lofty Tchatir Dagh by way of the Ayen Pass, was thence to march on Simferopol, and at length, in co-operation with Lord Raglan (already victorious, on its left), was to overthrow all Russian forces collected on the north of Sebastopol, and so complete the investment.*

The Emperor's plan as regarded the '2d 'army of 'operation.'

If following this plan of campaign Lord Raglan should be storming the Mackenzie Heights, and the Emperor at the same time filing through the Ayen Pass with his 'army of Diversion,' the two commanders would be separated from one another by a

* Lord Panmure to Lord Raglan, Private, 20th April 1855. As will be afterwards seen, I have before me several expositions of the plan in its successive stages of development.

The Country between ALOUSHTA and SIMPHEROPOL
in illustration of the French Emperor's plan.
Consult also the Frontispiece plan.

Scale.

MILES 5 4 3 2 1 0 5 10 15 20 MILES

mountainous and trackless region extending, even as crows fly, to a distance of some 34 miles, and substantially so prohibitive of transit that the readiest mode of communicating would be to send horsemen circuitously by a trebly long route. The idea of the 'field telegraph' was unripe, and not brought to bear on the project.

Opinion formed by our Government of that last part of the plan.

By our Minister of War this last project was regarded as 'perfectly visionary,' as 'a wild, impracticable scheme,' and even as one that, if executed, would 'lead to the inevitable ruin of his (the Emperor's) army';* but Lord Panmure does not say, and plainly it is not the fact that he imparted his adverse opinion to Louis Napoleon. He seems to have calculated that, in the closer presence of realities, our imperial ally would abandon the more flighty part of the plan prepared for his 'army of Diversion,' and bring its left into contact with the right of Lord Raglan's field army; so that thus (after fighting and happily gaining a battle), the two forces acting together would effectually conquer their way to the object of investing Sebastopol.†

General purport of the entire plan.

Although only a portion of the forces to be employed would consist of troops newly landed, the intended operation was to be one far dissevered from the tasks of the besiegers, and perhaps on the whole might be called a re-invasion of the Crimea from its south-eastern coast — a re-invasion to be executed by 65,000 or 70,000 French troops, commanded by

* Ibid. † Ibid.

CHAP. IX.

the Emperor or his lieutenant, and a composite force of 45,000 or 55,000 troops (English, French, Sardinians, and Turks) under the orders of Lord Raglan, making up altogether a strength for these field operations alone of from 120 to 135 thousand men.

IV.

The Emperor abandoning his intention of going out to the Crimea;

On the 21st of April, the Emperor closed his visit to England; and in Paris a few days afterwards he abandoned his intention of going out to the Crimea.* By a letter of instruction to Canrobert, dated the 27th of April, he announced his change of purpose; and showed as one of its consequences that Canrobert (not replaced by his Emperor) would continue in command of the army, whilst Pélissier (not replaced by Canrobert) would command the Siege Army. With great elaboration and care—not omitting to explain his design for making a feint on the Euxine—he showed how he himself (as he thought) would have led the imagined campaign, and (not without vehement diatribe against the rival scheme of an advance from Eupatoria) declared his unabated approval of the plan he had formed. He fondly expounded it. He showed how he would dispense with a base of operations for his Aloushta campaign by not only putting eight days' rations on the backs

His letter of instruction to Canrobert.

* *Not*, as M. Rousset imagined, *after* Pianori's attempt of the 28th, but *before* it.

of his soldiers, but also (in the way pointed out) bringing up more supplies from the west. Computing the garrison of Sebastopol at 35,000, and the Russian troops gathered on the north of Eupatoria at 15,000, he attributed to the enemy's field army between Simferopol, the Belbek, and the Tchernaya a strength of 70,000; but disclosed what was evidently his ruling idea — an idea that the conquest thus planned for his 'army of Diversion' would or might take effect by surprise. (2)

In this later development of the imperial plan, the task assigned to Lord Raglan was declared (at the outset) to be still, as before, that of seizing the Mackenzie Heights;* but upon going into fuller details the Emperor forgot or ignored the earlier part of his exposition, and proposed that Lord Raglan should go on conducting a series of only preparatory operations until after the anticipated capture of Simferopol by the French, when — by virtue of processes more easy to dramatists than to generals engaged in 'flank marches' under the eyes of a powerful enemy—he was to either advance in pursuit of the Russian field army then already compelled to fall back by the advance of the French in its rear, and to seize the 'Old City Heights,' or else find himself brought into contact with the 'army of Diversion' victoriously advancing to meet him from the town newly seized. Then of course was to follow a triumphant co-operation of the two forces thus joining hands, and the whole of the enemy's

* 'S'emparer des hauteurs de Mackenzie.'

CHAP. IX.

field army was, as the Emperor expressed it, to be either driven into Sebastopol, or otherwise into the sea. (3)

Such, we know, was the dream. But men versed in real war understood that the plan sought to break up an army of 180,000 men into three fractions so far disparted as be incapable of affording to one another any mutual support, and next, so contrived that, supposing the enemy to be at all fairly served by his emissaries, his spies, and his scouts, two at least of the fractions thus separated would be brought into desperate peril, whilst the third—the one under Lord Raglan—would perhaps for a while, be intact, and possibly even victorious against its immediate adversaries, yet find itself in the crisis so placed as to be unable to come to the rescue of either of the two other 'armies' in time to avert the catastrophe. (4)

Whilst professing in terms to desire that his plan should be calmly weighed by Canrobert in concert with Lord Raglan, the Emperor nevertheless took pains to urge its adoption with almost vehement earnestness, and in doing so disclosed a strange confidence in his own untried powers as a strategist. 'Such is,' so he wrote, 'such is, my dear 'General, the plan I wished to execute at the 'head of the brave troops which you have hith-'erto commanded; and it is with the deepest and 'the most bitter grief that—forced by interests 'more weighty to remain in Europe—I am obliged 'to renounce a plan in the execution of which I am

'sure I should have succeeded.* Consider it coolly 'with Lord Raglan; and, although I do not pretend 'to be always right, I cannot abstain from remind-'ing you that, if Marshal St Arnaud had followed 'exactly the plan which I traced out for him, we 'should now have Sebastopol in our power, and 'the army would not have been exposed to so much 'suffering.' †

Before this imperial letter had passed the sixth day of a journey performed by old-fashioned means, the injunctions it carried were destined to be outstripped, outdone, overpowered by words that flying more swiftly were also a great deal more wild.‡

V.

3d of May. The Generals in the Crimea acquainted with the imperial plan.

By despatches brought out with the mails, and already in their hands before noon on the 3d of May, the French and the English Commanders were made acquainted with the general purport of the arrangements concluded at Buckingham Palace, and with the tenor of the Emperor's projected campaign, whilst Lord Raglan was also apprised of the opinion which our Government had formed of its merits, and of the prospect of superseding it by a more feasible scheme.

* Made on the 27th of April, this the first mention of the Emperor's change of purpose was despatched by mail, but outstripped by the telegram to the same effect which we shall see reaching Canrobert in the night of the 3d of May.

† The Emperor to General Canrobert, 27th April 1855.

‡ See *post*, pp. 259-262.

CHAP. IX.

He soon after received the Agreement drawn up at Buckingham Palace, with instructions to concur in the measures for carrying it into effect; and, the Paper containing a proviso that orders were 'to be given to 'Generals Canrobert and Lord Raglan to take the 'necessary steps for rendering their troops available 'for the intended services,' it followed of course that those words when imparted to the two commanders were meant to be the rule of their conduct.

Owing plainly of course to some accident this State Paper was not transmitted by the Emperor's Government to the French Headquarters; but Lord Raglan imparted his copy of it to General Canrobert.

It resulted from the Agreement that General Canrobert (drawing plentiful aid from the Turks) was to relieve Lord Raglan in the English trenches, and Lord Raglan—set free from all the toils of the siege—was to make ready with all fit despatch for his promised command in the field.

The joy of Lord Panmure.

It was in a spirit of unconcealed exultation that Lord Panmure framed this announcement. From the day when he made, as we saw, a strange and ugly beginning of his task as War Minister, he had been learning every day more and more to see, to feel, to confess the true worth of the English Commander; and having spoken indignantly of what the War Minister wrote in his early despatch, I can all the more gladly commemorate the unstinted, the generous confidence he now reposed in Lord Raglan when entrusting him (as he believed he was doing)

with the splendid task of undertaking a campaign against Russia on open ground, at the head of a separate army not less than 45,000 strong.* CHAP. IX.

VI.

The frail basis on which it all rested.

How joyfully the English Commander and the army under his orders would have bidden farewell to the siege-works, and entered upon a campaign in the open may be easily imagined; as may also of course the vexation of being mocked by an offer which could never be really made good. The whole plan was one built on a notion that (if only receiving the promised accession of Turks) General Canrobert could and would send away 50,000 of his French troops,† losing also the accustomed support of Lord Raglan's whole army, and in the truncated state thus attained attempt to hold the Chersonese and the ports of supply against the Sebastopol garrison, or rather, one may say, against Russia, because her field army could join (as indeed it had done at Inkerman) with the not yet invested fortress. Lord Raglan did not believe that General Canrobert would accept such a task.

In the day-time, however, of that Thursday the 3d of May which was destined—at night—to be stirring with almost mad orders from Paris, both Lord Raglan and General Canrobert might naturally

* Secretary of War to Lord Raglan, Secret and Confidential, 23d April 1855.

† 45,000 to his Emperor, and 5000 to Lord Raglan.

CHAP. IX.

enough understand that the elaborate plan of campaign submitted a fortnight before to the conclave at Windsor Castle was not so much a subject inviting to prompt, sudden action as one meet for subsequent study, and accordingly, until evening came, they were rather intent on the enterprise of which it is now time to speak.

CHAPTER X.

THE INTERPOSITION OF THE FRENCH EMPEROR CONTINUING AND BRINGING ABOUT THE RECALL OF A JOINT EXPEDITION.

I.

CHAP. X.

Project for opening a passage into the Sea of Azof.

To open the fortified straits leading into the 'closed' Sea of Azof, Lord Raglan adopting with warmth the eager counsel of Lyons had been pressing the French to concur with some of our land and sea forces in a joint expedition to Kertch, or, more explicitly speaking, to that long, bare, steppe-land peninsula which borrows its name from the town.

The Straits of Kertch.

This peninsula of Kertch on the one side, on the other, a forked tongue of land jutting out from the coast of Circassia, approach each other so nearly that the waters there rolling between them are narrow enough to be reached by artillery planted on shore. Whilst sundering thus the two headlands, these waters unite the two seas and so form the straits giving entrance from the Euxine to what was the Palus Mæotis, that is, the Sea of Azof. Known of old as the difficult waters of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, they are now called the Straits of Kertch.

CHAP. X.

By seamen the straits were regarded as consisting of two distinct 'Narrows'—the first one extending off ground adjacent to Cape St Paul, and the other one off Yeni Kalé. The town of Kertch (Panticapæum, once the dwelling-place of King Mithridates) faces those somewhat broader waters which spread out between the two Narrows.

II.

The enemy's endeavours to guard them.

The enemy had long been alive to the importance of keeping the straits firmly closed against the enterprises of the Allies, and had made great exertions to compass his object. Owing mainly to storms, and the strength of the currents, he had failed, it is true, in the strenuous endeavours he made to block the two narrow channels by either the sinking of ships, or the sinking of anchors, or resort to explosive contrivances, and his expedient of collecting an armed flotilla in the roadstead of Kertch was not one that strengthened him greatly against powerful navies. He had planted no artillery on the Circassian side of the straits; but along the opposite shore—the shore of the Kertchine Peninsula—where it faced and commanded the two narrow channels, he had established seven powerful batteries which effectually kept the straits closed against the ships of his adversaries. These batteries, whilst open in rear, were, each of them, also commanded by higher ground rising behind them which had not been fortified;

THE
KERTCHINE PENINSULA
SEA OF AZOF
THE PALUDEENE AND ARMOORUM BATTERIES
THEODOSIA

and the way in which a Russian commander could hope to be able to protect them from seizure was by operating against the assailants with Horse, Foot, and Field-Artillery.

On the whole, it appeared to result that, if there should spring up a conflict for the key of the straits, it would take the shape of field operations maintained in the Kertchine Peninsula.

The Peninsula of Kertch.

This Peninsula jutting out eastward from the main of the Crimea is some sixty-six miles in length, and the isthmus, at its narrowest part, is not much more than ten miles across; though, if measured (as indeed has been usual) from the old fort of Arabat, on the Sea of Azof, to Theodosia on the Euxine, its breadth is doubly as great.

Baron Wrangel there in command: his forces.

Baron Wrangel commanded the forces in this Kertchine Peninsula, and they numbered not far from 9000;* of whom some 3000 were cavalry.† The infantry comprised two battalions and one company of troops of the line, the rest consisting of Fencibles—that is, Foot Cossacks—and what were called 'local troops'—forces not at all approaching in quality to Russian troops of the line, and hardly, I believe, thought presentable on fair, open ground to good European battalions.‡

The task set before him.

Approaching without toil or trouble under the wing of supreme naval power, and gliding along off

* 8750.

† 1143 Hussars, 152 Horse-Artillery, and 1711 Cossacks.

‡ The above details as well as those which follow are all based upon General Todleben's expositions, vol. ii. pp. 264 *et seq.*, and Appendix, 415 *et seq.*

CHAP. X.

a coast-line which offered several fit landing-places, the troops of the Allies could make feints, or commence real attacks at their pleasure. One excellent landing-place on the beach, not far distant from Theodosia, invited the Allies to make an attack on the isthmus. Another no less convenient on the beach of Kamish Boroune, attracted them towards what, we know, was their real object; for it offered a footing on shore at a distance of only four miles from the westernmost of the seven coast batteries.

Of course under these conditions, the defence of the Peninsula was embarrassed by conflicting exigencies. Baron Wrangel must have eagerly yearned to secure, if he could, the great object for which he was there, and accordingly to defend the coast batteries which kept the straits closed; but then also and on ground so far west as to be many miles distant from the centre of such operations, he yet more anxiously wished, and indeed had been specially ordered by his Commander-in-Chief, to defend the Arabat Isthmus, and the great road passing along it which gave him his means of communication with the main of the Russian army.

His dispositions.

Regarding this last part of his task as one of great moment he suffered his posts on the Isthmus to absorb three-fifths of his limited infantry strength, and (if quality be considered) much more, thus immensely curtailing, and substantially indeed quite annulling his means of effective resistance to any strong body

of troops which might seek to wrest from him the key of the straits by simply assailing in rear his string of seven coast batteries.

On the whole, it results that — abounding in anxiety for the defence of the Isthmus, and the great road passing along it which linked him with the main of the army—he reluctantly made up his mind that the seven coast batteries must be left in a state of defencelessness against attacks made in their rear by powerful bodies of troops. He of course did not mean to endure that the batteries should be insultingly seized without resistance by any small body of men put on shore—as in scorn—from the ships; and accordingly, whilst keeping his Hussars at Arghine within a distance of only some 30 miles from the landing-place of Kamish Boroune, he retained in the neighbourhood of Kertch four pieces of field-artillery, and a body of some 2500 men (chiefly Fencibles) of whom nearly 1900 could be spared to act as infantry;* but on the other hand, his adopted plan was to abstain from defending these batteries against an enemy disembarking in strength, and even to destroy them himself, as soon as he might perceive that they were about to be gravely attacked by soldiery either landing, or landed on the neighbouring part of the coast.

* More exactly 1883, the rest being employed in serving the coast batteries, and other tasks confining them to particular spots. In this body of 1883 men only 133 were regular troops, the rest being 'Fencibles.'

CHAP. X.

III.

Amongst those who had considered this project, the French and the English alike were agreed that their land and sea forces co-operating in the measures proposed might put a great stress on the enemy by embarrassing his more easterly lines of communication, and cramping his means of supply; but our own people lured by an enterprise in which their Navy would act, whilst rejoicing besides in a prospect of carrying the empire of the sea to waters hitherto closed, were more especially eager to have the attack set on foot; and it was mainly, I believe, from his wish to meet this strong English feeling that on Sunday the 29th of April General Canrobert in a spirit of friendliness agreed at last to the scheme.*

The eagerness of the English to have the attack set on foot:

General Canrobert's assent to it.

A too anxious commander is the natural prey of false 'emissaries.' Upon returning to his quarters General Canrobert there found awaiting him the report of an impudent spy who, whilst either so ignorant or so deceptive as to say nothing of the most conspicuous fact—Baron Wrangel's great strength in cavalry—made bold to declare that the enemy's infantry at Theodosia and Kertch alone had a strength of no less than 27,000; and, though Canrobert did not give his full credence to such an account, he allowed it to weigh on his mind. The next day, accordingly, he wrote anxiously on the sub-

His subsequent doubts and objections.

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, May 4, 1855.

ject to Lord Raglan.* At a later hour of the same day, he fell into a state very near to despondency. His imagination no longer content to dwell on the great strength in numbers with which it invested Baron Wrangel, went on to picture them concentrated, and whilst asking Lord Raglan's counsel, he declared it to be his own opinion 'that the chances 'against succeeding in the enterprise were much 'greater than those in its favour.'†

Lord Raglan's masterly answer to him.

Lord Raglan thus answered: 'The operation can 'only be undertaken on condition of its execution 'being immediate. The enemy is working at the 'task of barring the straits; and, if he were to 'succeed in completing the obstructions he is now 'raising up, we should have to abandon all hope of 'occupying the Sea of Azof—an object to which our 'Governments attach great importance. It might 'possibly have been well, if we had been able to 'spare more troops for the enterprise; but it is in 'rapidity of action, as it seems to me, that we shall 'find our best chances of success. Considering that 'we do not mean to establish ourselves in the Peninsula of Kertch, but only by a *coup de main* to 'destroy the defences which prevent the passage of 'our ships, we may fairly believe that 10,000 men 'will achieve this result. The enemy's numbers in 'the Peninsula may be greater, but they are not 'concentrated; and, to effect a concentration, he

* Canrobert to Lord Raglan, 30th April 1855, first letter of that date.

† Canrobert to Lord Raglan, 30th April 1855, second letter of that date.

CHAP. X.

'would need more time than we should require for 'our *coup de main*.'* Then after showing in detail how great (after landing) would be the advantages of the Allies over the enemy in point of comparative proximity to the batteries which had to be taken, he ended by declaring his opinion that the projected operation might be executed without incurring risks other than the ordinary risks of war, and with chances of success which, considering the importance of the result desired, were sufficient to justify the enterprise; but always, he said, on condition that it be undertaken 'without the least delay.'†

Canrobert deferring to Lord Raglan.

General Canrobert replied:—'Since your Lordship 'notwithstanding the observations I felt it my duty 'to make in my letter of yesterday is of opinion 'that this enterprise undertaken with the troops 'before indicated presents itself with fair chances of 'success, I hasten to say that I am giving orders for 'the prompt embarkation of the French corps which 'is to participate in it concurrently with the English 'troops.'‡

IV.

Sailing of the expedition on the 3d of May.

So at last on the 3d of May, there embarked upon this expedition from 10,000 to 12,000 troops, of which three-fourths were French and one-fourth English. The English squadron was commanded by

* Lord Raglan to Canrobert, 1st May 1855. The original is in Lord Raglan's always excellent French.

† Ibid.

‡ Canrobert to Lord Raglan, 1st May.

Admiral Lyons, the French one by Admiral Bruat. The French troops were under the immediate direction of General d'Autemarre, but both that and the English part of the land-service force were commanded by Sir George Brown. Our people carried with them the all-precious light of sound knowledge respecting the enemy's dispositions and strength in the Kertchine Peninsula, and Major Gordon of the Royal Engineers whose admirable report had made clear the path of action was himself on board the flotilla in command of a body of Sappers. Together with the papers accompanying it, Lord Raglan's instruction to Brown was a model of lucid guidance.* It was believed that after rapidly accomplishing their tasks, the troops might be promptly brought back, and that no risk of harm to the cause of the Allies would be run by withdrawing them for a very brief period from the Sebastopol theatre of war.

CHAP. X.

To mislead Russian scrutiny, the flotilla at first steered away as though making for Odessa, but assumed its true course after dark.

V.

The Submarine Cable.

But now, and even with suddenness, there began to interpose in the war that new and dangerous magic which has hugely augmented the already

* A copy of this was enclosed in Lord Raglan's despatch to the Secretary of State, cited *ante*.

CHAP. X.

great powers of mischief conferred on an absolute ruler by carrying for him his orders with a speed so transcendent of space that, although perhaps the commanders to whom he is dictating action be men parted from him by distance extending over thousands of miles, he still may dare to look for obedience commencing from almost the hour in which — perhaps smoking the while — he lazily utters his orders to some Palace servitor, or himself writes down a direction to one of the telegraph clerks.

Where no electricity penetrates, a distant commander is able to tell his rulers at home that the clever instructions they send him are based upon a layer of facts which has long ago ranged with the past; but of course no such shield can be used where the magic 'conductors' are working; so that, if there be the ripest experience, the amplest knowledge and wisdom at one end of the cable, and at the other, mere folly, mere ignorance propped up by conceit and authority, it is the experience, the knowledge, the wisdom—now unshielded by Distance and Time —that may have in the clash to give way; for wholesome jeers of the kind that after cruel disasters laughed down the old 'Aulic Council,' have been hardly as yet brought to bear with any sufficing severity on those who dictate by telegraph.

No one saw the grave dangers of electric communication more clearly than did the commander of the Emperor's Reserve at Constantinople. 'They will be 'able,' wrote General Larchey, 'to send orders and

'counter-orders from Paris which will shake the 'command of the army.' *

The Submarine Cable connecting the seaport of Varna with the shore of the Chersonese now came at last into full play (1); and our Government did not abuse it; but—exposed to swift dictation from Paris—the French had to learn what it was to try to carry on war with a Louis Napoleon planted at one of the ends of the wire, and at the other, a commander like Canrobert, who did not dare to meet Palace strategy with respectful evasions, still less with plain, resolute words.

VI.

Telegrams from Paris.

The first message brought out from Paris by submarine cable was one of a wholesome sort; for it simply empowered—and did not command—General Canrobert to call up from Constantinople the Corps of Reserve; but the messages that rapidly followed were each of them strangely perturbing.

Night of the 3d of May:

Between ten and eleven o'clock on the night of this 3d of May, General Canrobert came to the English Headquarters and informed Lord Raglan, that by what was described as 'an important tele-'graphic despatch' newly come in from Paris he had received—not authority merely, but—positive orders to 'bring up at once the army of Reserve from Con-'stantinople, and for that purpose to send down

Canrobert's visit to Lord Raglan with a new telegram.

* Quoted, Rousset, ii. p. 164.

CHAP. X.

'without loss of time every ship he could place his 'hands upon to the Bosphorus—to detach as soon 'as these new troops should arrive a division to 'be landed at Aloushta, and moved from thence to 'the head of a defile leading to Simferopol, and 'thus threaten that town—to march a large body 'by Baidar towards Baktchi Seräi, and a third 'column by Tractir to the attack of Mackenzie's 'Heights, and, to enable him to make these move-'ments in sufficient force, to bring half of Omar 'Pasha's army to this position from Eupatoria.' *

This was ordering the subservient, yet painfully anxious Canrobert to go at once into a fit of strategic hysterics, and in that weakly violent state—after first too approaching Lord Raglan!—begin a campaign against Russia.

In the frenzy thus enjoined upon Canrobert, he was to become amongst other things a generalissimo —was to 'march' Lord Raglan with the English army against the enemy in the field, and to 'bring' Omar Pasha's army from Eupatoria!

Discussion between the two commanders:

With a smile, I am sure, in his mind, though not perhaps on his lips, Lord Raglan told Canrobert that the plan 'appeared very complicated.' After discussing it for some time, General Canrobert announced 'that these orders of the Emperor would compel him 'to recall the troops which had left Kamiesh for 'Kertch.' Lord Raglan observed that 'such a pro-'ceeding would be a great misfortune, and would 'create a bad impression' both in the army 'and

* Lord Raglan to Sir Edmund Lyons, 4th May 1855, ½ to 3 A.M.

'elsewhere,' and 'at last,' he wrote, 'I persuaded' General Canrobert not to recall the troops 'upon the 'understanding that he relinquished his intention of 'doing so at my instance."* CHAP. X. its result.

General Canrobert remained with his colleague till nearly one o'clock in the morning; and, when he had at last gone away, Lord Raglan was soon in that sleep with which nature blesses the weary, and especially a weary commander; but there had not as yet come an end to even this single night's revelry of the electric currents now inaugurating their turbulent mission. At a quarter past two, Lord Raglan was awakened by the arrival of a French aide-de-camp, bringing with him a letter from Canrobert, and another, and later telegram newly come from the Emperor—from the Emperor acting in person. It was thus that the Emperor telegraphed: —'The moment is come for getting out of the 45 'in which you are. It is absolutely necessary to 'take the offensive 450. As soon as the Corps of 'Reserve shall have joined you, assemble all your 'forces and do not lose a day. I greatly deplore 'my not being able myself to go out to the Crimea.' 2.15 A.M. Arrival of aide-de-camp with yet another telegram;

The confusion that well might be wrought by thus madly pelting with telegrams an already distracted commander was a little augmented by failure in the use of conventional signs; for what had been meant by '45,' and what by '450,' the decipherers could not divine; (2) but the interpreted words of these telegrams were so wild, so perturbing that perhaps

* 'Sur ma demande.' Ibid.

CHAP. X.

by comparison the two occult signs were not altogether unwelcome.

and letter from Canrobert declaring himself

The accompanying letter from Canrobert to Lord Raglan announced with strong expressions of regret and vexation that this last Imperial telegram made it impossible for him to let the French troops continue their voyage towards Kertch, and that accordingly he was sending a despatch-boat in pursuit of Admiral Bruat requesting him to return to Kamiesh. He added that he should feel very grateful if Lord Raglan would address the same request to Sir Edmund Lyons;* and Canrobert's aide-de-camp proposed that Lord Raglan should send his letter to the Admiral by the French despatch-boat; but Lord Raglan declined the offer, saying that for the task of imparting what had occurred to Sir Edmund he required a little time, and would send his communication by an English ship.†

compelled to recall Admiral Bruat.

Reception of this by Lord Raglan.

With respect to General Canrobert's wish as expressed in his last communication, Lord Raglan was sternly reserved, and did not undertake to do more than convey to Admiral Lyons the terms of Canrobert's letter.‡

VII.

'I cannot say,' wrote Lord Raglan to Admiral Lyons, 'how deeply I deplore this unexpected inter-

* General Canrobert to Lord Raglan, ce 4 Mai 1855, 1 heure du matin.

† Lord Raglan to Admiral Lyons, 4th May 1855, ¼ past 3 A.M.

‡ Ibid.

'ruption of an enterprise from which I anticipated 'not only success, but the most important conse- 'quences. My only consolation is that both you 'and I have done our utmost to forward an object 'which the Government had much at heart.*

CHAP. X.

But Lord Raglan gave more than condolence. Perceiving at once the wide scope of the mischiefs, the troubles, the dangers with which the Great Alliance was threatened by this French secession occurring—and perforce with publicity—in the midst of a warlike enterprise, he was not a man to sit moaning over such a 'dispensation' without an effort of will to lessen or avert the misfortune; nor again was he one who in such a condition of things, could fail to be thinking of our Admiral (Lyons) or of Sir George Brown—they were, both of them, his personal friends—now about to be overtaken at sea by the palsying words of arrest despatched to Bruat by Canrobert; and, though not of course wishing or meaning that, when they should see the Expedition deprived of three-fourths of its soldiery, the Admiral and the General should—in anger—go on, spite of all, with aims and plans wholly unchanged, he yet dwelt with evident wistfulness on a lurking idea that the two gallant men, upon learning the orders sent out to the French, might become passionately eager to reconnoitre the coast with a mind to seize any fair opening for the action of the truncated force which still would remain under Brown. The force numbered less than 3000, but these were prime

Venturesome course taken by Lord Raglan.

* Ibid.

CHAP. X.

troops: the Highland Brigade, some Rifles, some skilled engineers, 700 of the Royal Marines; and, considering that to the very utmost of naval competence, they would be eagerly supported by Lyons with his ships close at hand, what might not be done by such troops? It is true that Baron Wrangel was supposed to be holding the district with forces about 9000 strong, of whom some 3000 (consisting mainly of Fencibles) were believed to be in or near Kertch; but according to the latest Reports, his troops—far from having been concentrated—were established at distant posts. Was it not therefore possible, or even within the range of fair likelihood that Sir George being stronger immeasurably than all the troops about Kertch, might complete the destruction of the coast batteries without being even molested by any force brought from a distance except perhaps bodies of cavalry with which he would know how to deal?

The latitude we are going to see granted was not destined to be used by Sir George; but to such as would know the true lineaments of Lord Raglan's magnanimous nature the bare fact of his giving this warrant for separate action under circumstances so strange and—at first sight—so full of peril, will not be an unwelcome aid.

With rare boldness, with rare generosity, and with a carefulness for the honour and fair name of others which was never surpassed, he framed a couple of sentences which opened a path of high enterprise for his chosen lieutenant to take upon the distinct responsibility of the commander-in-chief, yet — before-

hand — raised up a firm barrier against all the impatient observers who might otherwise blame the lieutenant for not exerting his power.

The latitude he gave to Sir George Brown.

The 'two sentences' addressed to Admiral Lyons were these :—'I apprehend that, if the French troops 'which form three-fourths of your force be withdrawn, 'there can be no chance of your being able to proceed 'on the Expedition with a fair prospect of success, 'and without incurring a risk which the circum-'stances would hardly justify. Should you and Sir 'George Brown, however, after due deliberation 'think it advisable to go on, and see what the state 'of things may be on the coast with the view to 'take advantage of any opening which may pre-'sent itself, I am perfectly ready to support any 'such determination on Brown's part, and to be 'responsible for the undertaking.' *

Thus Lord Raglan accomplished the task of giving his lieutenant full swing, yet relieving him beforehand from all risk of blame for the choice he might happen to make of either one or the other alternative.

VIII.

Detractors of course may pronounce that this warrant for separate action was the evident offspring of anger, and by natural consequence rash; nor can any deny to such critics the vantage-ground on which they will stand, when reminding us that the English

* Lord Raglan to Admiral Lyons, 4th May 1855, ¼ past 3 A.M.

CHAP. X.

Commander gave leave to push on the enterprise with troops having only one-fourth of the strength he himself and his colleague had agreed to allot for the enterprise. But Lord Raglan at least based his daring on fairly accurate knowledge of the enemy's last dispositions.* This knowledge gave him a right to anticipate with something like confidence that our troops after landing in the eastern part of the Peninsula could be only encountered at first, if even encountered at all, by some 3000† troops of inferior quality which could have no pretensions to stand against any such forces as our Highlanders, or the Royal Marines, and that before the coming up from elsewhere of any strong bodies of Russians, our people (taking care against Cavalry, as already he had warned them to do) might complete their brief, simple task —the task of destroying or maiming a string of coast batteries lying all of them open in rear. Still Lord Raglan, as we have seen, did not force the adventurous step on his lieutenant, and though arming him with power to hazard it, did this only on condition that both he and the admiral with him should themselves feel impelled towards the enterprise.

That the granting of even this sanction was a venturesome act I do not affect to deny; but the

* This I am enabled to say by comparing the knowledge as evidenced by the papers before me with the statements of General Todleben.

† The real number as we have seen being less—viz., 2572, of whom only 1883 could be spared for field operations.

enlightenment we have received since the morning of the 4th of May, when the letter to our admiral was written, gives us much better reason for confidence than people can generally have when speaking in the potential mood; for we see nearly all the conditions under which Baron Wrangel would have been called upon to act if Sir George in concert with Lyons had thought fit to go on with the enterprise;* and all that seems undetermined is a question how far the shoal waters would have suffered our navy to act—by either gunboats or otherwise—in repression of cavalry masses coming down the smooth slopes of the steppe, and undertaking to operate against our troops on the shore. But even supposing them safe against any fire from the sea, the Russian horse if thus venturing would have found themselves confronted by bodies of infantry which (duly forewarned as they were, against the attempted surprises of horsemen by Lord Raglan's thoughtful precaution) might be expected to prove staunch as rocks against cavalry charges, and well able to meet all such onsets with so steady a fire as would be likely to prevent the experiments from being too often repeated.

Turning thence to conjecture on the subject of infantry against infantry, we find on the one side, a body of 1750 Fencibles with only 133 men of the Line supported by four guns; on the other, the whole Highland Brigade, with 700 of the Royal Marines, with a battery of field-artillery, and besides a number of Riflemen, and a company of Sappers under Gordon,

* See last footnote.

CHAP. X.

all contributing to make that choice body of less than 3000 men a formidable instrument of warlike power. Under conditions like these, there was no such approach to equality as could well raise a doubt of the issue. What however seems most likely is that not deeming himself to be insulted by the scantiness of a disembarked force which was, after all, greater in numbers than his own 1900 foot-soldiers, Baron Wrangel would have acted on his foregone resolve, and abandoned at once to our people the seven precious coast batteries which formed the key of the Straits.*

Thus inquiry if conducted with care, goes far towards making it clear that Lord Raglan in giving the warrant was, after all, rightly inspired.†

Lord Raglan must have thought with great care of the state of effervescence into which our allies might be thrown, if the enterprise should be pushed to an issue in spite of General Canrobert's secession, and must seemingly have convinced himself that the effect of this resolute measure on the minds of the French would prove in the end to be good.

IX.

Return of the expedition.

With the forces engaged in this Kertch Expedition all seemed as yet to be prospering. The conditions

* See *post*, vol. viii. chap. iv.

† The 'enlightenment' is more than commonly vivid, being not only furnished by Todleben's admirable expositions, but also by the actual experience deriving from the second Kertch Expedition.

CHAP. X.

were such that a highly effective reconnaissance could be made from the sea. Captain Spratt looking out from the Spitfire, and Captain Le Bris from the Fulton, were able to reach a conclusion—now known to have been soundly based—that the success of the enterprise was likely to prove sure and prompt; but when so nearly approaching the field of the contemplated operations as to be seen and duly reported from the Light-tower marking Cape Takli, the flotilla with all its keen hopes was overtaken at sea by General Canrobert's orders; and under the bitter compulsion thus put on the French, their Admiral—Admiral Bruat—obeyed the command to turn back. He moved slowly in order that Lyons, if also recalled, might the sooner overtake and rejoin him.

When Lyons, some hours later, received the letter despatched to him from the English Headquarters, he and Brown did not make up their minds to use that power and separate action with which Lord Raglan had armed them; and therefore our people soon followed the retrograde move of the French.

Feelings excited by its recall:

Next day—it was Sunday, a Sunday remembered with bitterness—the flotilla returned into port; and the thousands on board it brought back under such conditions as these were hurt, were aggrieved, were almost forced to know that some untrustworthy hand had seized for the moment a power to trifle with the armies and navies whilst busied in warlike enterprise.*

on board the flotilla;

* Lord Raglan declared his belief that the feeling of disappointment endured by the men—French and English alike—was universal

CHAP. X.

The French Admiral's—Bruat's—report stated only the facts without comment; yet the facts being such as they were, it reads like a pitiless charge against him who had sent the recall.

Amongst the myriads wondering at the recall of the flotilla were not only the enemy, not only the fleets and the armies, but also a multitude planted on the all-precious line of communication which connected the invaders of Russia with their homes in the West of Europe.

in Constantinople;

Apart from any ideas of Sultan, statesmen, diplomatists (all only adjacent dignitaries not mingling in streets or Bazaars), the Mind of the Imperial City, if in those days unmastered by judgment, and affording no trustworthy guidance to any mortals on earth, was still other than null, was still—if hardly enlightened, yet—after a manner suffused by the smouldering fire of Greek Intellect—was keenly, was loudly alive. Over-blest in her number of creeds, over-Babeled in her number of races, and customs, and tongues, brooding over the grave of one empire, and the bed—the sick-bed—of another, distraught between the East and the West, distraught between the Past and the Future, inarticulate, deaf to the reasoners, Stamboul all the more heaved with opinions, if not with Opinion, and was roaring with the voices of prophets. She commonly fed upon Rumour, but fastened, this time, on a truth—on the tidings of a Western

and deep.—To Secretary of State, Secret and Confidential, May 8, 1855.

flotilla returning, as in fear or in penitence, from before the Cimmerian Bosphorus. CHAP. X.

We shall presently see, or infer, that the emotion of French troops encamped near Constantinople drew some at least of its strength from the murmur of the Imperial city.

The fleets and the armies of the Allies had met no reverse in arms. It was simply the message—the hysterical message—from Paris that, taking effect on an enterprise already begun, had raised the growth of scorn in their rear.(3)

The fleets on the coast, and the armies encamped before Sebastopol shared the rage of the forces brought back, and this angry feeling extended with even augmented savageness to the Emperor's corps of Reserve assembled on the west of the Bosphorus; for these regiments lay so near Constantinople as to be reached, one may say, by the howl of the Imperial city; and, though guiltless themselves of all fault, they seem to have felt gravely wounded by what other Frenchmen had done. 'All the world,' wrote General Larchey, the commander of the French Reserve force at Constantinople, 'accuses the electric 'telegraph of having caused the failure of the Expedi- 'tion to Kertch from which the best results were ex- 'pected.* . . . Rightly or wrongly there is a general 'outburst of indignation at the counter-order of the 'Expedition to Kertch. Sailors and soldiers alike 'have been tearing themselves with rage.' † on the fleets and the troops

* How just this instinctive suspicion was we have seen.

† 'Se sont rongé les poings.' To the Minister of War. Quoted Rousset, ii. pp. 164, 165.

CHAP. X.

The indignation of the fleets and the armies, whether English or French, extended to our people at home, and was fiercely expressed by our Government. Lord Panmure wrote:—'If he [General 'Canrobert] had refused his consent to the em- 'barkation, he might have been forgiven, but to 'recall an expedition after it has sailed, and to 'expose your game to the enemy, shows him to be 'utterly incapable of high command or of weighing 'the results of so false a move as he has made. 'Well may the army and fleet be disgusted. I only 'wonder Bruat obeyed so desponding an order.* I 'never will believe that the Emperor's instructions 'were such as to leave Canrobert no discretion.'†

The Emperor soon spoke for himself, and the tenor of what he alleged we shall presently learn; but first, we must hear General Canrobert, and then try to do him more justice than was possible in that angry time.

Canrobert's account of the recall.

In his telegram to the Emperor dated the 4th of May General Canrobert after stating that the Kertch expedition had started on the previous evening, went on to say this:—

'Your despatch of yesterday 3d May, 1 P.M. 'has arrived. It compels me without losing a day 'to send all the means of transport of the French 'fleet to Constantinople. I am making the expedi-

* Disobedience on the part of Admiral Bruat would have been mutiny, for he was under General Canrobert's orders.

† To Lord Raglan, Private, 7th May 1855. In several subsequent despatches Lord Panmure repeated strong expressions of his anger and disgust.

'tion return contrary to the advice of Lord Raglan, 'and am proceeding to conform myself to your 'orders.' CHAP. X.

It seems just to acknowledge that if Canrobert really owed strict obedience to the Emperor's flighty commands, he could not have well helped recalling his troops from that Kertch Expedition, which, far from aiding at all towards the instant concentration of forces enjoined by his sovereign, was drawing off the French means of transport, and several thousands of men to serve for a while at some distance from the three allied camps. General Canrobert, it is true, went astray, but his error was one of old growth. It lay—not, as believed Lord Panmure, in any misconstruction of orders, but—in his then confirmed habit of undue subserviency to the will of a master who of course could have no just pretensions to be wielding his army from Paris.* Plainly not understanding at all that a general with allies at his side who would worthily command a great army in an enemy's country must perforce be a statesman as well as a soldier, he seems to have fancied that his duty of simple obedience was analogous to that of the Private expectant of the 'halt!' or 'quick 'march!' The justice due to him.

* The Emperor himself once declared (though of course inconsistently with much of what he had done) that he had no such pretension. 'Je ne prétends pas commander l'armée d'ici.' To Pélissier 23d May 1855, quoted Rousset, ii. p. 192.

CHAP. X.

X.

Letter from the French Emperor

It seemed that the wrath of our people was endangering all prospect of concert between the Allies; and in explanation of the course he had taken, the French Emperor addressed a long letter to our Ambassador in Paris :—

'PALAIS DES TUILERIES, 7 *Mai* 1855.

in explanation of the course he had taken.

'MY DEAR LORD COWLEY,—I request you to bring 'under the full consideration of the English Govern- 'ment the bearing of the facts which I am going to 'state in a few words.'

Then after citing four documents with which we are already acquainted,* the Emperor proceeds :—

'You see then, Milord, that I have not counter- 'manded the Expedition to Kertch, but that in the 'opinion of Canrobert this expedition is incompatible 'with the offensive movement against the Russians, 'and in this alternative, hesitation is not possible, 'for Canrobert says himself that on the 24th the 'state of things was too strained to allow of its last- 'ing more than fifteen days. Also under date of 'the 6th of May midnight I have received a de- 'spatch from Canrobert to this effect :—" The squad- '" ron has just returned; I am going to send all the

* Viz., the letters of the 24th April from Canrobert and Niel, the telegram from the Emperor personally of the 3d of May, and Canrobert's telegram to the Emperor of the 4th of May, mentioned *ante*, pp. 272, 273.

'"disposable vessels to Constantinople. Lord Raglan '"awaits instructions from London for his concur-'"rence in the field operations." Thus, then, the 'vessels which were to have gone to Kertch are now 'engaged in going to fetch troops at Constantinople, 'and I strongly approve this determination of General 'Canrobert.* The Expedition to Kertch might have 'been advantageous at either an earlier or a later 'time, but now, when the salvation of the army 'before Sebastopol is in question, and that this salva-'tion can come only from a combined attack on the 'Russians, it would be madness, as it seems to me, 'not to concentrate all one's means of action on the 'principal point, and to take on one's hands a new 'expedition which, although useful, would have no 'immediately decisive effect. I request you there-'fore to be very seriously urgent with the English 'Government in pressing it to send Lord Raglan 'precise orders, to the end that a general attack may 'be made against the Russians, and that, in these 'critical circumstances, not an instant be lost.— 'Receive, &c., NAPOLÉON.'

Comment on the letter.

The defence contained nothing dishonest; and, indeed, it showed fairly the process by which this singular monarch had guided himself into error. First, by plainly misreading General Canrobert's letter of the 24th of April, he had brought himself to believe that his army was in imminent danger.

* He says:—J'approuve fort cette détermination du Général Canrobert.

CHAP. X.

How was this to be met? Of course by his infallible remedy. Having long before made himself sure that his plan of campaign was the one road to victory and conquest, he then got to see in it also the one plank of safety by which to escape great disasters. Next—as though at the time in a frenzy of prophetic assurance—he complacently took it for granted that a telegraphed message from him would not only drive General Canrobert, but even Lord Raglan himself and all the gathered Allies to clutch at 'salva-'tion' by the 'only' way open, and enter at once on his travesty of the famous Marengo campaign. Thence it was that he had sent the hysterical telegrams which broke the rest of the Generals on the night of the 3d of May, and stopped short in mid-course a flotilla already in sight of the enemy.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EMPEROR'S DICTATION RESISTED, THE COLLAPSE OF HIS PLAN, AND THE RESIGNATION OF CANROBERT.

I.

CHAP. XI.

Canrobert and Niel proposing consideration of the Emperor's plan.

THOSE telegrams which had the effect of arresting the Kertch Expedition were messages addressed to the object of pressing on the execution of the Emperor's campaigning plan; and, whatever General Canrobert in his heart may have thought of the project, he was not strong enough to encounter it with even respectful evasions, still less to set it aside with a laugh, or an oath, as some other men might have done; whilst Niel was even so circumstanced that he could scarcely help trying to defend those Imperial notions which he himself, as we saw, had greatly helped to inspire.*

Niel was not a bashful man; and on the 4th of May—the very morrow of Canrobert's secession from the enterprise commenced against Kertch—he came to the English Headquarters full fraught with the Emperor's plan. After amply expounding the pro-

* See *ante*, chap. v.

CHAP. XI.

Course taken by Lord Raglan:

his opinion of the plan;

ject, he requested that Lord Raglan would discuss it with Canrobert. Lord Raglan did not respond. On the ground that he was still in expectation of the instruction which Lord Panmure had promised to send him, he avoided—at least for a time—the discussion proposed; but his opinion of the Emperor's plan was soon and decisively formed. 'The pro-'ject,' he writes,'—'the project of his Imperial Ma-'jesty appears to be open to many objections. It 'would divide the allied forces far more than is 'desirable, and throw a large portion of them into 'a country where from its nature the difficulty of 'communication between the several columns would 'be necessarily great, and where therefore the enemy 'might fall in great force upon one body without the 'one next it being able to render it assistance.'*

And reflection confirmed his opinion; for in reference to that part of the plan which committed the defence of the siege-works to 30,000 French and 30,000 Turks, he afterwards wrote:—'The trenches 'with the material in them would not be safe; and, 'should they be forced, the depots of Balaclava and 'Kamiesh upon which the existence of the allied 'armies depends would be exposed to great danger. 'The garrison of Sebastopol is estimated at from '37,000 to 42,000 men. The troops on the north 'side consist of very large numbers, and a great por-'tion of them might be so massed in the town as 'that they could fall with a superior force upon 'either the right or the left attack, without the one

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, May 5, 1855.

'being able to assist the other.' Lord Raglan also said he should urge such a scheme as might seem calculated 'to produce the desired result in the 'simplest and readiest manner.'*

and of what would be the right course.

And this he well knew how to do. What Lord Raglan desired to achieve against the Sebastopol garrison was first to attack and reconquer the counter-approaches which still remained in their hands; whilst in reference to the plans suggested for completing the investment of the fortress, he preferred to all others a movement which, with competent aid, Omar Pasha might find means to execute by advancing from Eupatoria against the enemy's rear; and the Pasha himself approved a campaign of that sort, saying even that, to make good the task, he needed no help at all except some French regiments of horse.

Of the opinion of Canrobert, who had submitted himself, as we saw, to the government of General Niel's 'Mission,' yet was destined, after all his subserviency, to take a step roughly extirpating his mystified Emperor's Plan, I need not here speak; but in the French camp, a general of other quality was now fast attaining to a great meed of power.

II.

Pélissier's letter of the 5th of May.

On the 5th day of May, General Pélissier addressed to his Chief General Canrobert a letter so masterly,

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret and Confidential, May 8, 1855.

CHAP. XI.

but also so masterful that it became an event in the siege, and was pregnant with consequences. First, Pélissier laid it down confidently that with their then strength in numbers and their other advantages, the Allies were secure on the Chersonese from every great Russian attack. Next, he treated it as certain enough that in spite of all the interposed difficulty they could carry Sebastopol by proper siege operations. Next again, he declared a conviction that without too much turning aside in search of other expedients, the right course was simply to push the siege to extremity. Then boldly, but with consummate adroitness, he went on to deal with the contingency which would have to be met if the error (as he considered it) of resorting to field operations should be 'inexorably' commanded by the Emperor. To comply in that case with the mandate, or to treat it at the least with an outward seeming of deference, he sketched a plan of campaign, which—since mentioning the port of Aloushta—might be said to have borne at first sight a kind of superficial resemblance to the Imperial project; but then he went on to show—to show with his Vauban in hand—that neither this his own plan, nor any other field operation could be wisely or otherwise than rashly attempted without first confining the garrison to a strictly narrowed defensive, and reconquering, to begin with, all those of the counter-approaches which still remained in their hands. Though well knowing of course that, through Canrobert, he was substantially addressing the Emperor, he pressed this

conclusion in language that might well be called peremptory.

Wholesome bearing of the letter upon the counsels of the Allies.

Now, whilst so pointed out by Pélissier as an absolutely needed preparative for any field operations, this measure of reconquering the counter-approaches was also the one he pronounced to be no less essentially requisite for duly pressing the siege; so that, whether the Emperor's instructions should be maintained, or revoked, the course to be taken at once would in either event be the same.* And this, as we have seen, was the very same course which Lord Raglan had already advised.

Thus, supposing him to stand unresisted in the argument he based upon Vauban, Pélissier was paving the way for a happy convergence of opinion which would serve at the least to provide for the immediate future of the Allies, and—without contravening too flatly a sovereign's plan of campaign—might cause the preparatives made towards rendering it eventually feasible to be absolutely the same as those needed for pressing the advance of the siege. From reasons thus offering guidance for the immediate future there also resulted a corollary which applied with bitter force to the Past. If the reasoning was sound, it appeared that the way in which the Emperor had clandestinely prepared for the execution of his plan was in point of warlike expediency, so wildly, so glaringly wrong as to be almost the actual opposite of what skill and wisdom enjoined. Instead of turning his army on the Chersonese into 'an army in

Corollary resulting from the letter in its bearing upon the Past.

* Rousset, ii. pp. 168 *et seq.*

CHAP. XI.

'waiting,' and making it submit—almost shamefully—to the enemy's audacious encroachments, he, if primed with that knowledge of War which Pélissier now pressed upon him, would have, months ago, urged Niel and Canrobert to prepare for the due execution of his favourite project by peremptorily reconquering beforehand every one of the counter-approaches, and effectually confining the garrison to the strictest defensive.

Thus the Emperor was taught after all, that Honour would have been his best policy, and that such a sincere prosecution of the siege as would have kept him free from the guilt of disloyalty towards Lord Raglan would besides have saved the French army from that error of submitting to the counter-approaches which, if rigidly obstructive (so long as it lasted) to the advance of the siege, was also one that forbade the essentially needful preparatives for his own cherished plan of campaign; so that what to the cynic was 'only a crime,' and—still better—a crime undetected, now stood out exposed as a 'blunder.'

Pélissier's growing ascendant.

Pélissier's insistence on the policy of wresting the counter-approaches from the enemy's hands came specially well from a general who was fresh from the conquest of one of these strongly held Works;* and it was in the nature of things that he whose strong will had some five days before achieved the capture of the Sousdal Counter-guard should be taking an ascendant over one whose relation towards the

* See *ante*, p. 204 *et seq.*

exploit of the 1st of May was that of a general who had only consented to the enterprise under violent pressure, and had afterwards even apologised to his Government at home for a victory implying deviation from the tasks of an 'army in waiting.'* CHAP. XI.

Then again, the frank, manful, wise boldness which marked Pélissier's treatment of the Emperor's instructions contrasted superbly with the subservient attitude of the Commander-in-Chief towards his mischievous sovereign; and on the whole one may say that from after the administration of this powerful letter on the 5th of May, General Canrobert was an almost annulled, and Pélissier a conquering man. Contrast. Effect of the letter.

III.

Before the middle of May, the Emperor's letter of the 27th of April had reached both the French and the English Headquarters; as had also a new, though in most respects similar Exposition of his campaigning Plan. (1) At the instance of Louis Napoleon, our Government had been framing a set of instructions for Lord Raglan on the subject of the Emperor's Plan, but these did not reach him in time for the Council of the 14th of May, to which we shall presently come. They, however, were not at all needed. Lord Raglan knew the mind of his Government. Expositions of the Emperor's plan now before the Commanders.

From Louis Napoleon's abandonment of his intention to come out to the Crimea, and from the The duties it assigned to Canro-

* See *ante*, p. 208.

CHAP. XI.

bert and Pélissier.

order providing that Pélissier should be in charge of the 'Siege-Army,' it followed that Canrobert, if adopting the Imperial plan, would himself have to execute that imagined advance from Aloushta which the Emperor had intended to lead.

12th May. The three allied Commanders in Conference.

Omar Pasha, invited by General Canrobert and Lord Raglan to take part in their deliberations, came up for the purpose from Eupatoria; and on the 12th of May, the three allied Commanders met in Conference. Though not coming then to any resolve, they discussed at great length the Emperor's plan of Campaign.

As we saw, the opinions of both Lord Raglan and Omar Pasha had been adverse to the Emperor's plan; and each of them greatly preferred the idea of an advance from Eupatoria; but Canrobert, as seemed very natural, could not easily escape altogether from the pressure of his sovereign's will; and it was only by yielding a little in that direction that agreement could well be attained. Lord Raglan on the whole thought it wise to humour the Emperor by consenting to an attack from the south, but took care nevertheless to reject all the more flighty parts of Louis Napoleon's plan.

14th May, renewed Conference. Lord Raglan prevailing.

Omar Pasha seemed to take the same view; and, when therefore on the 14th of May the three allied Commanders were again brought together in Conference, they agreed to make a forward movement from their right, and Lord Raglan brought Canrobert to engage that, instead of advancing from Aloushta upon Simferopol, he would place his extreme right

CHAP. XI.

at Baidar, and thence move on Baktchi Seräi.* In such case, the task of Lord Raglan would be to advance on Canrobert's left, and storm the Mackenzie Heights.

Agreement as to plan of field operations; but no further.

So far, therefore, the Commanders agreed; but their hope of ever really engaging in this projected campaign was conditional on their making it harmonise with the still greater object for which they had not yet provided — the vital, the paramount object of maintaining the position of the Allies in front of Sebastopol and securing their ports of supply.

This condition they did not fulfil.

Adverting to the detailed arrangements by which the Imperial plan sought to meet this great exigency, and in particular to the agreement of Buckingham Palace, which stipulated that the positions held by the English army in front of Sebastopol should be occupied by French and Turkish troops, Lord Raglan asked General Canrobert and Omar Pasha how they meant to provide for the defence of our siege-works. The answers he obtained were positive. Both Canrobert and Omar Pasha declared 'that it was impos-'sible for them to guard the English trenches.'† Omar Pasha assigned some reasons for his refusal; but—more flatly—'General Canrobert said he could

Canrobert peremptorily refusing to guard the English trenches:

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, May 15, 1855. General Canrobert did not admit to his Emperor that he had so far yielded.—Rousset, ii. p. 173 *et seq.;* but that he did in fact so yield is not only shown by the above despatch of the 15th, but also — and more pointedly—by the secret despatch of the 19th.

† Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, May 15, 1855.

CHAP. XI.

'not impose such a task on any portion of his army;'* 'and thus,' continues Lord Raglan, 'it became evi-

Omar Pasha also refusing.

'dent that the four Divisions of her Majesty's 'troops now engaged in occupying the trenches 'would have to remain on that duty when any

The consequences of these refusals.

'operations of an offensive nature should be under- 'taken. I confess that this is a great mortification 'to me.'†

Lord Raglan might well have felt pained when contrasting that great command in the field which the united Governments of France and England had agreed to provide for him with the task to which he found himself riveted by the absolute refusal of our French and Turkish allies to take his place in front of Sebastopol. He may even have felt disappointment. It is true that, when hearing at first of the Buckingham Palace agreement, Lord Raglan had smiled at the notion of Canrobert's ever consenting (whether aided or not by the Turks) to hold the entire position of the besiegers without an English force on the Chersonese to share his anxious task; but the change which substituted for Canrobert so strong a man as Pélissier to hold the immediate command in front of Sebastopol may have led the English Commander to think or hope for a moment that the French (as enjoined by the plan) would really take charge of his siege-works.

Lord Raglan's mortification.

Rejection of plan.

The refusal of Canrobert and of Omar Pasha to

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, May 15, 1855.

† Ibid.

take charge of the English trenches was substantially of course a rejection of the Emperor's project, and besides of that modified plan into which Lord Raglan had changed it.

An anomaly.

In this Conference of the 14th of May, it so happened—at first sight anomalously—that Lord Raglan—by concessions—was able to approach at some points towards the wishes of Louis Napoleon;* and that he who delivered the blow which destroyed the Emperor's plan was—of all men!—General Canrobert.

Canrobert's idea that the English army might be split into two.

When Canrobert reported these transactions to the Minister of War, he disclosed an idea that Lord Raglan might have divided his force into two distinct armies, leaving one in front of Sebastopol and with the other (supported by the Piedmontese contingent) undertaking to act in the field. (2) To go and thus split up a body of some 25,000 English troops into two little far-sundered armies—dividing the diamond into halves!—would have been contrary to all policy, to all common-sense, and, one may add, to the dominant conception of the Emperor, who had not only made it a chief feature of his plan to keep the English army entire, but taken pains to augment its power by assigning troops of other nations to act with it under the same commander. 'The British army,' writes Lord Raglan, 'is too 'small to be divided. It should act in one body.'†

* By assenting to an attack from the south, and by undertaking to operate against the Mackenzie Heights.

† To Lord Panmure, Private Letter, May 1, 1855.

CHAP. XI.

The Emperor's plan exposed to contact with realities;

A part of the havoc sustained by this ill-fated Plan when it reached the Crimea can be shown in arithmetical figures. The Emperor's Palace-made reckoning had laid it down, as we saw, that, to guard the positions of the besiegers in front of Sebastopol, there were needed no more than 60,000 men, of whom one half might be French, and the other half Turks; but inquiry at the seat of war soon made it appear that the army or armies entrusted with this momentous charge should have a strength of 90,000—that is, a force exceeding the one which had seemed great enough to the planners in Buckingham Palace by no less than 30,000 men.* And again, the whole force which Omar Pasha now consented to leave in the south of the Crimea was less by 15,000 than the Palace computers had imagined or hoped it would be; † so that, after making these two corrections, and then beginning to learn what forces might be actually assembled for campaigning in the open field, the difference between estimate and reality would already appear to be one of no less than 45,000 men, and the next glance at these hard realities would show that of the 30,000 Turks who were to concur with the French in guarding the siege-works not a man would in fact be there present.

with what result.

* A joint commission appointed by the three Commanders to inquire and report on this subject, recommended unanimously that the strength of the force remaining planted before Sebastopol should be 90,000.

† Omar Pasha was sending some troops to the Chersonese, but withdrawing others, and the upshot of his arrangements was as stated above. Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, May 15, 1855.

CHAP. XI.

There was no reason why the French Emperor should not have set himself free from the error of 15,000, and the two enormous errors of 30,000 each, before constructing his plan. If taking that simple precaution, he would have seen the imagined French Corps he meant to collect at Aloushta reduced all at once from 65,000 to a strength of but 5000 men.

When inquiry pushed close had thus shown that, to defend the position before Sebastopol and the ports of supply, there would be needed—not merely 60,000, as provided by the Emperor, but—90,000 men, that Omar Pasha, instead of contributing 30,000 men (as Louis Napoleon assumed) towards the work of the siege, would spare no troops at all for the purpose; and finally, when General Canrobert, disobeying his sovereign, refused to liberate the English army for field operations by taking charge of their trenches, there sank from under this project the basis on which it had rested, and the structure of course fell to pieces.

Statement by Canrobert that he was going to take the field.

The French Commander indeed reported to his Government that he and Omar Pasha would immediately prepare to take the field; but few, I suppose, can have thought that this second invasion of the Crimea—without an English army to share it—would be really undertaken by Canrobert.

Duration of the harm done by General Niel's 'mission.'

Big with Louis Napoleon's scheme, the baneful 'Mission' of Niel began, as we saw, to clog France in the first days of February; so that, when the

CHAP. XI.

design—meeting criticism at the seat of war—collapsed in the middle of May, its incumbency had been keeping the siege in a state of impuissance for nearly three months and a half.

Nor even then—strangely enough—shall we see its effects wholly cease. The Emperor was never informed that his Plan, at the touch of realities, had collapsed in the way we have seen, and accordingly did not attempt to remove or break down the huge obstacles it had encountered at the seat of war, nor to build up anew calculations there roughly upset; but, as though he were walking in sleep, he still carried with him his dream, still went on vainly commanding that people would hear and obey it.

IV.

General Canrobert's first endeavour to rid himself of the command.

Whilst in conference on the 14th of May, General Canrobert was either fast reaching, or already had reached the conclusion that, consistently with his sense of duty, he could no longer command the French army.

Producing the Dormant Commission, he placed it in the hands of General Pélissier, and requested him to assume the command.* This, Pélissier, with a plainly wise self-control, declined to do, maintaining that the instruction was only meant to be acted upon in the event of Canrobert's death or serious illness.†

* This step, as Pélissier said, was taken by Canrobert 'five or six 'days' before the 19th of May.

† I do not observe that this transaction was ever made known to the French Government; but General Pélissier imparted it to Lord Raglan. Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, 19th May 1855.

CHAP. XI.

General Canrobert, however, on the 16th of May, wrote by telegraph thus to his ruler:—'My health 'and my mind fatigued by constant tension no 'longer allow me to carry the burthen of an immense 'responsibility. My duty towards my sovereign 'and my country forces me to ask leave to deliver to 'General Pélissier a commander of skill and great 'experience the letter for him which I hold. The 'army which I shall quit is intact, inured to war, 'ardent, and confident. I ask the Emperor to 'leave me a combatant's place at the head of a 'simple division.'*

16th April. His second endeavour.

His resignation tendered.

General Niel must have felt that his 'mission,' and his claim to be superintending the ostensible commander-in-chief were brought into jeopardy by a change which removed the docile Canrobert, and raised up in his place so strong a man as Pélissier; but acting, as may well be believed, under an imperious sense of public duty, whilst also perhaps somewhat eager to move, if moving at all, on the topmost crest of the wave, he was audacious enough to advise, nay almost, one may say, to enjoin the immediate withdrawal of one man, the immediate raising up of the other; for he telegraphed thus to the Minister of War: '16*th May*, 10 A.M.—Accept 'without hesitation the resignation of General Can- 'robert. He is very much fatigued. Answer by 'telegraph. General Pélissier is ready to take the 'command.'†

Strange interposition of Niel.

In reply to Canrobert's letter of resignation, the

* Rousset, vol. ii. † Ibid.

CHAP. XI.

Canrobert's command given up and transferred to Pélissier.

Minister of War telegraphed :—'The Emperor accepts 'your resignation. He regrets that your health is 'affected. He felicitates you on the sentiment which 'makes you ask leave to remain with the army. 'You will command in it—not a division merely 'but—General Pélissier's Corps. Give up the com-'mand to that general.'*

General Canrobert accordingly handed over the command of the army to General Pélissier. Persisting in his wish to have only the lesser command for which he had asked, he was placed at the head of his old force, that is, the 1st Division.

Assigned causes of Canrobert's resignation.

In a letter to his Emperor General Canrobert pointed out several troubles as those which had caused him to give up the command, and he stated them to be these :—

1. The slight relative effect produced on Sebastopol by the excellent batteries of the Allies.

2. The disappointment of the hopes he had entertained of being attacked by the enemy on the reopening of the bombardment.(3)

3. The arduous difficulties encountered in preparing the execution of the Emperor's plan—an execution rendered nearly impossible (according to his account) by the non-co-operation of the English commander.

4. The very false position in which he had been placed with the English by his sudden recall of the Kertch Expedition.

5. The exceptionally great fatigues moral and

* Rousset, vol. ii.

physical which he had never for an instant ceased to be undergoing for the last nine months.*

With respect to the first of the reasons adduced, we have seen that General Canrobert was in error; for over and over again the French and English batteries brought to ruin the works they assailed.†

With respect to the second of the reasons, we saw much of the cruel anxiety suffered by General Canrobert from an opposite cause—that is, from the not irrational and not therefore unwarlike dread of being brought to battle in an execrable position.‡ He afterwards, as we have seen, represented himself to be longing for another Inkerman, but on what grounds I do not know.

With respect to the third of the reasons, we have seen that a main foundation of the Emperor's plan was his proposal to obtain the services of Lord Raglan and his army in the field by causing Canrobert to relieve him and them from all their siege duties, and that is exactly what Canrobert—in disobedience for once to his Emperor—peremptorily refused to do.§

To the untoward circumstances which constituted the fourth of Canrobert's reasons Lord Raglan attached great weight. 'It is evident,' he writes, 'that General Canrobert has felt very uneasy since 'he recalled Admiral Bruat from the Kertch Expe-'dition, and that he has been very much weighed

* To the Emperor, 19th May 1855. Quoted, Rousset, ii. p. 180.

† See *ante*, the last fifteen pages of chap. vi.

‡ See *ante*, chap. iv.

§ See *ante*, p. 285.

CHAP. XI.

'down by the anxiety this has occasioned him, and 'that he is not sorry to be relieved from a respon- 'sibility which had almost overpowered him.' *

Whilst agreeing that the remembrance of his secession from the Kertch Expedition was a burthen on Canrobert's mind, one may also give weight to the twelve first words of his third reason, and withal to the now felt ascendancy of General Pélissier.

The letter of the 5th of May had dominion, and in every line seemed to show that the writer—not the recipient—was the man who plainly ought to command.† It is under this aspect that General Canrobert's surrender of the command to Pélissier seems loyal, patriotic, and wise. For the honour of the French army, it was necessary to shelter it from the dictation of an incompetent sovereign undertaking to wield it from Paris. To give it the shelter thus needed, and to confront a powerful enemy with the resources of his very own mind—a steadfast mind apt for war business—Pélissier was abundantly able; and, General Canrobert not having the gifts or the stern independence required, it followed of course that the change must be one of the most wholesome kind; but not the less was there merit in the resigning commander who forbade thoughts of 'self' to prevent him from achieving a great public good.

The merit of Canrobert's self-sacrifice;

Under the discipline of Pélissier's letter General Canrobert must at last have discovered that what he had mistaken for an honourable, loyal obedience to

The lesson apparently taught him by Pélissier's letter.

* Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, May 19, 1855.

† See last letter of Pélissier's, *ante*, p. 279.

the will of his sovereign was a noxious and unpatriotic subserviency which brought discredit on France, and endangered the repute of her army. He knew that what successful revolutionists are always the first to call 'law' had directed him to obey the mere Emperor as distinguished from the Emperor's Government, and apparently knew nothing at all of that greater though unwritten law which commanded him to do no such thing. It was reserved for his successor to show how the commander of a French army should comport himself when put under stress of the meddling persistently attempted against him by a man such as Louis Napoleon.

Feeling of the French army towards Canrobert.

By his well-tried personal bravery, by his zeal, by his fervour and many good, warlike qualities he had won the esteem of his army; and this blessing had not been torn from him at the time of his resignation by any untoward disclosures. Unaware of his having concurred in that machination which had long kept the siege of Sebastopol in a state of semi-abeyance, they never, it seems, marked him out as the object of camp discontents, and were thoroughly in the mood to admire him when hearing of his honest resolve to exchange high and tempting command for simply a 'combatant's place.'

The 'morale' of the French army under Canrobert.

When Canrobert declared that upon resigning the command of his army, he left it in a state of high warlike ardour and confidence, he made an assertion which, although not inaccurate, might, if taken

CHAP. XI.

alone, prove deceptive, and lead to a notion that the prank of turning an army into 'an army in 'waiting' can be played with impunity.

The actual truth is that towards the end of March, the 'baneful mission' of Niel had produced its natural effect on the French troops; and, although Lord Raglan himself had wisely refrained from writing on so tender a subject, our Home Government drawing its knowledge from other sources, became very deeply concerned at what it believed to be the fallen spirit of Canrobert's army. Basing himself upon what were then his latest accounts on this subject, our War Minister thus wrote to Lord Raglan: 'I think you may be quite sure now of the 'Emperor's advent to the Crimea. He professes 'that it is his desire to place the fullest confidence 'in you, and to consult you as to all his plans. I 'fear he will have great difficulty in restoring the '*morale* of his troops which, from all . . . tells 'me, is greatly shaken not only in the eyes of the 'English soldiers, but in the estimation of the French 'officers themselves. This is altogether a very pain-'ful state of things, and gives me great anxiety as to 'the result of our present operations.*

Down to even the middle of April, the spirit of the French army was in such a condition that Rousset describes it thus: 'The Russians were sur-'prised and joyful, the English disgusted, the French, 'to say the least, astonished. One could no longer 'make out anything about the conduct of this siege,

* Lord Panmure to Lord Raglan, Private Letter, 16th April 1855.

'of these demonstrations of force ending always in 'the contrary, and men returned sadly into the 'labyrinth of the trenches as though destined never 'to leave it. There was—not discouragement but '—a fatalist's sort of resignation to orders and 'counter-orders alike. The very Turks of Omar 'Pasha did not render a more dismal obedience.' *

Soon, the vigour of Pélissier exerted itself so superbly against the wishes of Canrobert that the spirit of the French army was restored—was raised to a high pitch of warlike ardour on the 22d of April, and to a victorious sense of its power on the 1st of May when Pélissier, overcoming the resistance of his then Chief, attacked, and carried, and conquered the Sousdal Counter-guard. It was therefore in spite of Canrobert, and by the happily overdominant energy of his irrepressible subordinate that the French army proudly emerging from out of that state of depression to which the 'mission' had lowered it, stood ready and eager for action.

Opinions of Canrobert expressed by men in authority.

The men in authority were swift, I observe, to appreciate the sacrifice implied in General Canrobert's resignation; yet, even whilst expressing this sentiment, they did not conceal their desire to see the French army commanded by a more determined Chief. 'General Canrobert,' wrote Marshal Vaillant, 'is a noble heart.' . . . 'I hope we are now going 'to advance more resolutely." †

* Rousset, ii. p. 145. What gives value to this statement is that the writer spoke with knowledge of all the most secret papers in the French War Office.

† To Niel. Quoted, Rousset, ii. p. 177.

CHAP. XI.

Lord Panmure, after speaking of Canrobert's 'vacillation and indecision of character,' writes: 'I 'am not sorry that he no longer fills a position to 'the responsibility of which he appears to have been 'quite unequal. Possessing in the most eminent 'degree all the qualities of courage and zeal which 'constitute the brave soldier he did not possess 'those comprehensive views, nor that moral courage 'in Council which mark a sagacious and resolute 'general.' *

General Niel was not silent. Referring to the extraordinary letter in which he had reproved the Minister of War for not giving better instructions to Canrobert,† he now wrote to Marshal Vaillant: 'I 'quite understand, Monsieur le Maréchal, that it 'must have seemed to you extraordinary that I 'should have addressed complaints to you of the 'silence which you observed towards the General-in-'Chief on questions which were ceaselessly occupying 'him. Now, you have the explanation. He was bend-'ing under the burthen; and you will see that I 'must have gone through much embarrassment before 'determining to speak and act as I did.' Then, strange as it seems, General Niel proceeds to explain how it was that he had not before advised the removal of Canrobert!—'Certainly, I do not hesitate, 'where I see my line of duty clearly marked out; but 'in this case, I have long been in doubt as to that 'singular nature [the nature of Canrobert] which

* Despatch to Lord Raglan, 21st May 1855.

† See *ante*, p. 221.

'has so exactly the appearance of decision when a 'resolution is to be taken a long time beforehand, 'and which always draws back when the moment 'for execution has come. He is a very worthy 'man.'*

Long afterwards, Marshal Pélissier (then Duke of Malakoff and Ambassador at the Court of St James's) tried kindly, one day, to impart to me his estimate of the commander to whom he had succeeded in the Crimea, but did this on a plan so dramatic—he set up a kind of 'lay figure' to represent General Canrobert!—that I cannot here trust myself to attempt a reproduction of the fervid, energetic performance by which he showed the immensity of the difference established by nature between his predecessor and himself.

Lord Raglan had perhaps been more troubled by the failings of Canrobert than any other man living, but he penned no severe, unkind word on the qualities of the retiring Commander.

Effect of recent disclosures on Canrobert's reputation.

The disclosures of a more recent time tend to lighten or rather divert the weight of blame thrown upon Canrobert by showing him to have lost his free-will since the first days of February, when Niel put him under the generalship of Louis Napoleon; and, although it be true that the attempt of this fanciful sovereign to govern from Paris the fight going on in Crim-Tartary was an abuse of mon-

* Niel to the Minister of War, May 18, 1855. Rousset, ii. 177 *et seq.*

CHAP. XI.

archical power which Canrobert ought to have checked, just men, before wording their censure, will at least try to gauge the predicament of a hapless commander who could only have shielded his army from imperial dictation by breaking or evading the law.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RELATIONS OF AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA WITH THE BELLIGERENTS. — THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH RUSSIA. — THE AUSTRIAN PROPOSALS.—THEIR ULTIMATE REJECTION ENTAILING A CHANGE OF AUSTRIA'S POLICY.

I.

None must think that, because the war raged, Diplomacy had been all this while idle; but, to know the condition of things which the Conference of Vienna encountered in the spring of 1855, one needs must recur for a moment to rather an earlier time.

The union of Austria and Prussia with the Western Powers.

When, as long since we saw, France and England at last declared war against Russia in the spring of 1854, both Austria and Prussia united themselves with the Western Powers—not indeed by engaging at once to take part in the physical strife, but—by preparing for the eventuality of having to take the field, by making together the treaty devised with that object, and withal by declaring in Conference that the delivery of the summons by which France and England had brought themselves into a state of

CHAP. XII.

war with Russia was a step 'supported by Austria 'and Prussia as being founded in right.'*

Its anomalous character.

It was anomalous of course that four Powers should be allied—for allied they were—against Russia, when two of them only as yet had come to be at war with the Czar, the other two simply announcing that they 'supported,' and approved the course taken by their more adventurous friends. One can hardly deny that the part thus played before Europe by the two applauding States had an aspect in some degree comic; for, though both of them owned mighty armies, and though both were more closely aggrieved by the lawless act of the Czar than either of the Western Powers, they, whilst not themselves taking up arms, declared instead with solemnity—as though they were Grotius and Puffendorf!—that the conflict undertaken by others, that is, by England and France, was what teachers call 'a just war.'

Still, in favour of this quaint proceeding there really existed some reasons which obtained and deserved no small weight; for statesmen perceived that by dispensing—at least for a while—with the armed intervention of Austria and Prussia they might narrow the area of the war, thus postponing, or even indeed altogether averting that evil which the phrase of the time used to indicate as 'a general conflagration in 'Europe;' whilst moreover there was room to believe that the Turks, and the two Western Powers,

* Protocol of the 9th of April 1854. Treaty of 20th April 1854 between Austria and Prussia. See *ante*, vol. i. cap. xxv., and the Papers in the Appendix to that volume.

with, to aid them, the merely potential, the merely half-drawn sword of Austria, could effectually expel the Czar's army from those Danubian provinces which he had seized as his 'material guarantee.'

Its efficacy for the first proposed object

And accordingly, in spite of the plan which dispensed the two more aggrieved Powers from any immediate need to be taking up arms, the alliance of the four quickly proved that, so far as concerned the repression of that particular outrage which had brought on the war, these States could enforce their will against Russia in a high-handed, summary way.

Secured against the contingency of any Russian attack by the attitude of her Western allies, Austria had been able to approach the once haughty Nicholas with commanding and peremptory words.

By mere summons, without the necessity of having to strike a blow, she had soon forced the Czar to abandon his hold of the principalities, and to recross the Pruth; but also by convention with the Sultan she had been peaceably enabled to occupy the delivered provinces with her own troops, thus establishing—at least for the time—her authority on that Lower Danube which was precious as an outlet for not only her own dominions, but also those of all Germany. This, not only for Austria herself but also for Germany, and therefore also for Prussia (which could not but heed German interests) was a happy result—so happy, indeed, that, if Austria along with Prussia and Germany had obtained it as the fruit of a war victoriously waged against Russia, the achievement securing so full a measure of justice might well have been treated as 'glorious.' Yet,

CHAP. XII.

without themselves going to war, Austria and Prussia had been enabled to attain these advantages, because the Western Powers (but more especially France) had been, all the while, standing ready to come to their aid in resisting any measures of vengeance attempted against them by Russia.

Tendency of this too speedy success.

The too speedy good fortune, however, thus wondrously blessing the German—that is, the non-combatant powers—had a tendency to weaken their union with England and France; for, since Austria and Prussia had already obtained what they sought, their new friendships in the West might grow cool. They were plighted auxiliaries who had received their great prize in advance, before being called into action; and, unless stayed by feelings of honour, might be tempted perhaps to desert.

The danger increased by another cause.

Moreover, France and England soon showed that against the aggressor they meant to be aggressive themselves, and that their chosen plans of campaign would withdraw no small part of their forces to countries and seas far away, thus materially reducing their power to support German States in resistance to any invasion by Russia. It resulted that, after a while, the two great Powers of Germany which, though not themselves taking up arms, had still solemnly blessed the good cause of the Western belligerents, were less and less under motives for going to war with the Czar, and also less and less sure that, if once committed against him, they would have all the help they might need from their French and their English allies.

Under stress of the reasons thus tending to make them hang back, the two German Powers were put to the proof of their loyalty, and one of them soon fell away.

The defection of Prussia.

Prussia—destined in later years to become a great, conquering Power, and the basis of a new, mighty empire—was then under the rule of a king—they called him Frederick William—who, although not endowed with the qualities for any such task, still kept in his very own hands the whole conduct of foreign affairs. His policy, if so one may call it, appeared to be in no degree shaped by any sense that he had of the duty attaching on Prussia as one of the five great Powers, and what he seemed to take for a guide was the mere composition of forces brought to bear on his mind by many and conflicting fears. Amongst these of course might be reckoned —for think of the ruin that followed on Jena and Auerstadt!—his lively fear of the French, with also his fear that, if tamely enduring the Czar's occupation of the Danubian Principalities, he would find himself deserted by Germany, and accordingly, as we have seen, he allied himself to the Western Powers and to Austria by the Protocol of the 9th, and the Treaty of the 20th of April.

But when he saw France and England engaging their strength in the East far away from Berlin, those tremulous scales that he used for weighing fears against fears began to show a great change; for the separated armies of France were of course for the moment less terrible to him as enemies than

CHAP. XII.

when held together, and besides, as befrienders, less able to help him against the contingency of his being attacked by Russia; so that, visibly, his dread of the French now became on the whole less oppressive than his awe of the Czar; whilst also his fear that Germany would turn against him for acquiescing in a Russian occupation of the principalities came soon to an end; because their approaching deliverance from the grasp of Nicholas was then already in process of being secured by the valour of the Turks, and by the energy of Austria, co-operating with the two Western Powers.

No dread of the evils that come with the lowering of a Nation's repute appeared to find any place in the Royal collection of fears; and, if the king for a moment felt qualms at the idea of deserting those more warlike States which had virtually wrought the deliverance, he very soon stifled his conscience. Before the last week of July, Frederick William began to hang back, and then by fast degrees lapsed away into undissembled neutrality.* His defection of course made it perilous for Austria to fulfil her engagements, laid Germany everywhere open to Russian diplomatists, made it even a clear, tempting field for all their decomposing exploits, and soon broke up the Confederacy into Statelets so feebly united that, whilst some of them were consenting, there were others refusing to 'mobilise'

* See *ante*, vol. i. pp. 444, 445 of the fifth edition, and the footnotes in the same pages. Prussia's first overt act of retrogression was a refusal to attend the Conference of the 22d of July, that had been summoned for giving effect to the Protocol of the 9th of April.

their respective armies, and one at least, if not more, that ingeniously found for its troops a happy medium state between being, and not being summoned to gather in arms—between standing up and sitting still.*

The harm Prussia did to her late—now abandoned—allies, by laying Germany open to Nesselrode's emissaries, was of a serious kind; † for, in its then absurd state of multiplied sovereignties, the country offered intriguers a rich field of action; and the once famous Russian diplomatists had not yet been superseded, or robbed of their well-tried power by marplots ranting at Moscow.

Prince Bismarck, it seems, in referring to the origin and course of this war, has denied that his country was bound to take a part against Russia; and no one, of course, should say lightly that the great statesman erred; but, to weigh his contention with any advantage, it is essential to know, step by step, the policy he would have chosen for Prussia from the time when Austria, Prussia, and Germany being all of them treated as nullities, Moldavia and Wallachia were defiantly seized by the Czar.

The loyal course taken by Austria.

The statesmen of Austria—in that respect like our diplomatists—have long been accustomed to govern their public acts by the dictates of personal honour; and, her honest, young Emperor clinging fast under difficult trials to sound patriotic designs, she at this anxious time was well steered through the num-

* Called 'Kriegbereitschaft.'

† See the Official Diplomatic Study.

CHAP. XII.

berless troubles besetting her by a Minister of commanding ability and invincible firmness. Against all the contrivances of Russia and her industrious emissaries, against the hysteric urgency of the Prussian king, against the ceaseless embarrassment of acting under an Emperor whose feelings, although he controlled them, still painfully clashed with his duties, against a formidable proportion—including perhaps the most powerful—of all his fellow-subjects, and finally in the opposite quarter against France and England when striving to draw him too far in the direction of their special desires, Count de Buol held his course with a steadiness, temper, and skill that never seemingly failed him throughout the long, perilous struggle.

Kept by this master-hand in the path of honour and prudence approved by her loyal Emperor, Austria did not forget the advantages with all the consequent duties that had accrued from her union with the Western Powers. Far from imitating the defection of Prussia, she armed at great cost for a war, and—though slowly—drew nearer and nearer to her Western Allies. Having previously declared, as we saw, her full, unreserved approval of the warlike course they were taking, she, in August, went on to record her concurrence in those four stated demands which, as France and England announced, they would peremptorily force on the Czar.*

* Protocol of the 8th of August 1854. The purport of the Four Conditions will be shown *post*, p. 317 *et seq.*

II.

By way of warning to Russia, and therefore in the interest of peace, the Austrian Cabinet imparted to that of St Petersburg the Protocol of the 8th of August with its statement of the Four Demands, and so not only made a beginning of that exceptional kind of mediation between the belligerents which she afterwards pursued, but also laid the foundation of what became after a while the 'Conferences held at Vienna ' for putting an end to the war.'

Step taken by Austria which made a beginning of her mediation.

The Czar at first did not deign to heed the warning from Austria, nor to act in any way on her statement of the Four Conditions which his adversaries meant to impose; and seeing this she drew nearer to the Western Powers. She negotiated with them a Treaty, engaging for herself that, if peace upon the basis of the Four Conditions should not be assured before the end of the year, she, in concert with England and France, would go on to devise measures fitted for attaining the objects of the alliance.

Course taken at first by the Czar Nicholas; and afterwards.

But since August, the months had been passing; and meanwhile, the once haughty Czar had listened with so much attention to the arguments adduced on the Alma, and afterwards repeated at Inkerman, that in a communication to the Austrian Government on the 28th of November, he all at once announced his acceptance of the 'Four Conditions' as a starting-point on which to negotiate for putting an end to the war. He thus in effect sued for peace,

His acceptance of the Four Conditions.

CHAP. XII.

and even undertook to accept it on the basis imposed by his enemies.

Treaty of the 2d of December 1854.

This step on the part of the Czar did not hinder the Austrian Government from proceeding with the Treaty we saw them negotiate. It was ratified by the contracting Powers, and bears date the 2d of December 1854.*

Preliminary negotiations for the Conference.

Prince Alexander Gortchakoff was sent by Russia to the Austrian Court as Minister Plenipotentiary; and in the last month of the year, France and England instructed their representatives at Vienna to confer with the prince on the subject of the basis proposed for peace negotiations. An informal meeting between Gortchakoff and the representatives of the three allied Powers took place on the 16th of December. The Allies, however, declared that they must be explicit in showing the interpretation they put upon the Four Points as drafted in the Protocol of the 8th of August, and—substantially—insisted that the conditions as there stated must be recast in the way they proposed. Accordingly in a Memorandum of the 28th of December 1854, communicated to Prince Gortchakoff by the Plenipotentiaries of Austria, France, and Great Britain, the Allies newly formulated their Four Conditions; but reserved to themselves a power to insist upon any other conditions that might afterwards seem to be required by the general interests of Europe.

It must be owned that this peremptory demand

* When yielding on the 28th of November, the Czar had probably learnt that the Treaty of the 2d of December was impending.

on the part of the Allies was exasperating, if not unfair, and the Russian negotiators appealed for guidance to St Petersburg; but—whether really craving for peace, or for some other reason determined to let the Conference meet—the Czar at once fully acceded to the new formulation required by the Allies, and Prince Gortchakoff announced the decision at a meeting held for the purpose on the 7th of January 1855.

Great efforts were made by Russia and the small German States to obtain the admission of Prussia to the now approaching Conferences; but the Allies would only consent to these prayers upon condition that Prussia should engage to take part in the war if the negotiations for peace should fail.

Exclusion of Prussia from the Conferences.

The king would give no such pledge; and accordingly, to the horror and indignation of his relatives, and of numbers whose interests were closely bound up with his monarchy, he remained excluded from the Conferences.* His realm ceased in effect for the time to be one of 'the five Great Powers'—not because it had lost any part of its physical strength, but rather owing to failings which brought its king into discredit. So low indeed had he fallen or seemed to fall that there was even a question of calling upon him to agree that as a pledge for his future conduct he should suffer one of his fortresses

* For the diatribes levelled against him by his friends and connections at this cruel time, see Sir Theodore Martin's 'Life of Prince Albert.' There virtually sat on the king what the French call a '*conseil de famille*,' and the tribunal, it seems, was not merciful.

CHAP. XII.

to be occupied by Austria, another by France, and another again by England.*

Question as to the effect of Nicholas's death on the prospects of peace.

When Nicholas died, many thought that the passing away of a sovereign who had personally brought on the war would be likely to accelerate its end; but some of those who had means of forming a judgment believed that the late Czar—well schooled by adversity—had not only resolved to make peace, if attainable on terms not derogatory to his sense of honour, but also—thanks to his habit of long-sustained absolute rule and to the dominating strength of his character—would have been perfectly able to enforce his will on all Russia against what might be the desire of many of his more warlike subjects; and again, as already we have seen, there was room for believing that the task thus regarded as feasible when undertaken by Nicholas, might be one beyond the strength of his son. Madame Lieven for instance pronounced that Alexander could not open his reign with an act of surrender or, as she fiercely worded it, cowardice.

The new Czar began his State utterances by making two public statements which violently clashed with each other. In a high-flying, loud manifesto he told his people that he was going in the glorious steps of Peter and Catherine. In another and

* England was to be asked to occupy Dantsic. Our Government instantly rejected the suggestion; but it was one submitted for consideration on very high authority.

quite sober statement, meant rather for non-Russian Europe, he through his Minister Nesselrode reminded mankind that his father had begun to negotiate for peace upon a basis then already accepted, and announced that he himself too would march in the path thus laid open before him.

III.

The Peace Negotiations at Vienna.

Pursuant to this declaration and to the concurring assent of France, England, Turkey, and Austria, a formal Conference was opened at Vienna on the 15th of March, under the presidency of Count Buol, the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and at its first meeting, there were present for Austria, Count de Buol and Baron Prokesch; for France, Baron Bourqueny; for England, Lord John Russell and Lord Westmoreland; for Russia, Prince Alexander Gortchakoff and M. Titoff; for Turkey, Aarif Effendi.

The Conference was afterwards joined by, for France, M. Drouyn de Lhuys, her Minister for Foreign Affairs, and for Turkey, by Aali Pasha, the Reis Effendi.

Of Count Buol I already have spoken.

Lord John Russell.

As conceived at the time when Lord Clarendon gave him his instructions on the 22d of February, the mission entrusted to Lord John Russell—an illustrious name in England — was a charge of vast scope;* for along with the task of negoti-

* He did not at that time hold office. It was during the course of his mission that Lord John became Secretary of State for the Colonies.

CHAP. XII.

ating a peace, he, to meet the event of its proving that the war must go on, was to endeavour to strengthen the existing armed league against Russia by obtaining further accessions, and to concur in providing for what, as confidentially indicated, was made to seem nothing less than a fearless resettlement of Europe, thus ostensibly lending the sanction of our own Foreign Office to the dreams of Louis Napoleon.

Lord John first went to Paris without, it seems, gathering there any aid towards the objects in view. On reaching Berlin, he learnt that a bye-negotiation for a treaty between France and Prussia was then in progress; and, although nothing treacherous was intended by either State against England, the circumstance seems to show that both she and her French ally were wasting their strength in cross purposes.

The personal reception accorded to their illustrious guest by the king and his Government was most cordial; but Lord John soon perceived that at Berlin there were none of the ingredients needed for forming a league. Concurrently with a professed willingness on the part of the king to concede the supremacy of Germany to Austria, the feeling against her of both the sovereign and his minister appeared to be one of bitter and deep animosity. The king wished, Lord John saw, to avoid a war with either Russia or the Allies, and was so anxious to abstain from acts tending to commit him to the Western Powers, that, although resenting his exclusion from the Conference,

he would not purchase his readmission by engaging himself to any definite course of action. The king declared that admission to the Conference was his right, and that those who had excluded him would repent of it. The king said he was not the adherent but the friend of the Czar, and that 'as his friend' he had frequently given him unpalatable advice. He said he believed in the bottom of his heart that the Czar sincerely desired peace, and would make any sacrifice for it compatible with the dignity of his crown. On the whole, Lord John Russell thus wrote of the Prussian king:—'While pursuing a policy to 'the last degree selfish, he gives himself the air of 'an injured prince, and assumes for his State a 'position ambiguous rather than dignified. His 'object evidently is to restrain Austria from acting 'on behalf of the Allies, and perhaps to induce the 'Western Powers to accede to such terms of peace 'as may be compatible with the interests of Russia.' The manful Prince of Prussia (now Emperor of the great united Germany) was strongly opposed to the adopted policy, and tersely expressed his opinion of its banefulness by saying that, if Prussia were to join the Allies, there would be peace in a fortnight; but the fainter heart, and the weaker mind of the king remained in the state we have seen.

Under conditions thus adverse, Lord John did not choose to present his credentials at the Prussian Court; and bidding farewell to the prospect of a general League, soon went from Berlin to Vienna.*

* Lord John Russell to Lord Clarendon, March 1, 1855.

CHAP. XII.

His task was thenceforth only twofold, that is, to negotiate for England in the approaching Conference, and meanwhile, if he could, to bring Austria into the war.

Prince Alexander Gortchakoff.

On Prince Alexander Gortchakoff as extant in the Conferences of 1855 one can hardly cast even a glance without more or less using the light which he many years afterwards threw on his own much exhibited character; and since it therefore seems necessary to make the allusion, one perhaps ought to add that despite what he had counselled and done, the man always remained in high favour with his sovereign and his country, thus acquiring some right to protest that, except for being the foremost in a public declaration of ill faith, he was not more dishonoured than the Czar, nor more dishonest than Russia.

Committed in 1870, his offence does not fall within the range of this narrative.

It is with the negotiations of 1855 that I have to deal; and in those, so far as I see, the prince was not guilty of acting with falseness or undue craft; and his faults, as displayed in the Conference, were not even cognate to deceptiveness, being rather what seemed want of skill, want of mental resource, want of power to persuade or conciliate, want of even the much-needed power to keep his temper under control. A main part of his duty, of course, was to draw Austria towards the Czar, and detach her from

the Western States; yet the process of exchanging ideas with an Austrian negotiator was the very one that more than all others provoked his ill-humour.

His subsequent career seems to prove that he needs must have had more capacity than he showed in the Conference-room.

M. Drouyn de Lhuys.

M. Drouyn de Lhuys was a man of ability and very high personal character. Before traversing the Continent on his way to Vienna he had gone to London, and there exchanged ideas with our Government. From the first he proved anxious to frame such conditions as might either lead to a peace or bring Austria into the war.

Debates in the Conference.

Count Buol ably opened the Conference by a brief, compact speech well designed for its object, and in words approved by all present, set forth the Four Conditions imposed by the Allies, and (in principle) accepted by Russia:—

'1. The Protectorate exercised by Russia over 'Moldavia and Wallachia shall cease, and the privi- 'leges conferred by the Sultans on these Principali- 'ties, as well as on Servia, shall henceforward be 'placed under the collective guarantee of the Con- 'tracting Powers.

'2. The freedom of the navigation of the Danube 'shall be completely secured by effectual means, 'and under the control of a permanent syndical 'authority.

CHAP. XII.

'3. The Treaty of July 13, 1841, shall be revised, 'with the double object of connecting more com- 'pletely the existence of the Ottoman Empire with 'the European equilibrium, and of putting an end 'to the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea.

'4. Russia abandons the principle of covering 'with an official Protectorate the Christian subjects 'of the Sultan of the Oriental ritual; but the Chris- 'tian Powers will lend each other their mutual 'assistance, in order to obtain from the initiative 'of the Ottoman Government the confirmation and 'the observance of the religious rights of the Chris- 'tian communities subject to the Porte, without 'distinction of ritual.

'The development of these principles will form the 'object of our negotiations.'*

After a labour of several days, means of giving effect to both the First and the Second Conditions were agreed to by all the plenipotentiaries, and there seemed to be a fair prospect of their proving able to deal no less happily with the Fourth Condition (if ever, indeed, they should reach it), whilst also they were able to come to terms upon the first part of even the Third Condition; but its latter words plainly ordained that means should be found for 'putting 'an end to the preponderance of Russia in the 'Black Sea;' and this was the matter that promised to be the subject of lasting contention. By

* Eastern Papers, xiii. I have preferred Count Buol's concise statement of the Four Points to the more wordy exposition furnished by the Memorandum of the 28th of December.

accepting the Four Points, Russia had committed herself to the principle of submitting to be deprived by some means or other of her preponderance in the Black Sea. What, however, those means should be had not been determined, and was the question to be taken in hand.

The Allies with a thoughtful regard for the feelings of Russia proposed that she herself should suggest the means of reducing her naval 'preponder-'ance' in the Black Sea; but Prince Gortchakoff suspected a snare; and (after a reference to St Petersburg) she declined to take any such step.

There of course are two ways in which 'prepon-'derance' can be terminated:—by either taking weight from the heavier scale, or adding weight to the lighter one. The Allies proposed that the object should be attained by either entirely neutralising the Black Sea—that is, ridding it of all ships of war, except a few mere Police vessels—or else limiting the number of war-ships that Russia should there keep afloat. On the other hand, Russia objected with great energy to both those plans, and then—no longer refusing to make suggestions herself—she offered some plans based on 'counterpoise' —one for instance proposing to open the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus to all nations;* another enabling the Sultan to open the Straits whenever he might find himself menaced, and to reverse the

* Annexes A and B to 12th Protocol. This plan was inadmissible; and, amongst other reasons, because it was wholly inconsistent with the Sultan's ancient and most cherished rights.

CHAP. XII.

'preponderance' complained of by calling up to support him the ships of any allies who might choose to answer his prayer.*

The Allies not accepting any plan of that kind, their difference with the Czar became sharply pronounced. Limitation or no Limitation of his Black Sea fleet was seen to be the question in hand.

Baron Bourqueny showed very ably that the plan of Limitation was only, after all, one providing that a fleet maintained on a closed inland sea should be on a peace footing.

Prince Gortchakoff of course, if so minded, might have declared the resolve of his Court with a dignified sparseness of words, and need not have sought to uphold it by any assignment of reasons; but—somewhat rashly—he urged (as if he were talking at Moscow) that to engage to limit the strength of the Russian fleet in the Euxine would be submitting to an infringement of the Czar's 'sovereign rights,' and thus subjected himself to the answer relentlessly inflicted upon him by M. Drouyn de Lhuys, who took care to remind the negotiator that that very Sea on which he claimed 'sovereign rights' had as matter of fact been swept clear of the Russian flag, and brought under the full control of Powers at war with the Czar.† M. Drouyn de Lhuys might have added that, even when Russia was at peace with the Western Powers (though subject indeed to their anger) they had forbidden her the use of those very 'sovereign rights,' had ordered her war-ships into

* Annex to 13th Protocol. † Eastern Papers, xiii. p. 58.

port, had taken good care to see the order obeyed, and had done all these things without provoking her Czar—a man not thought much wanting in pride—to meet their repressive authority with any Declaration of War.*

Lord John Russell gave point to his French colleague's argument by alluding to the future, and saying that the resistance of Russia on the question of Limitation would be obliging England and France to find the guarantees they required in a continued occupation of the Black Sea and the Baltic.†

To oppose that Russian contention which ascribed a kind of dishonour to the surrender of any 'sovereign rights,' Lord John Russell referred more than once to the lessons of History, submitting for instance that Louis Quatorze had consented to the demolition of Dunquerque without its having been thought that in making the sacrifice for the sake of peace he descended from high estate; but Prince Gortchakoff was ready, this time, with an adequate reply. He acknowledged that a sovereign might be driven to such a concession after meeting an unbroken series of military disasters, but denied, as he had a full right to do, that Russia at the time of the Conference had been brought into any such

* So that the Czar if asserting in conference what his people called 'sovereign rights,' must have owned, when pressed to be accurate, that he referred to his *former* possessions. He could neither have appealed to the principle of the '*uti possidetis*,' nor to that of the *status quo ante bellum*. Neither at the time of the Conference, nor in the winter preceding the declaration of war, was he master of the Black Sea.

† Eastern Papers, xiii. p. 67.

CHAP. XII.

plight. She had been vanquished in each of the battles; but her great Engineer had done much towards redressing the balance thus swayed.

The Western Powers maintained that, to content themselves with the 'counterpoise' plan would be in effect to postpone the deliverance of the Sultan's dominions from the danger of Russian aggression, and would leave it to be achieved, if at all, in a more or less distant future, by other, if any, men and by other, if any, alliances.

In the face of even that argument, there is ground for maintaining that the 'counterpoise' plan on the whole would have formed the best sort of protection to the Sultan's dominions;* but against the idea of substituting it, as the Russians desired, for a plan of Limitation there existed at the time of the Conference one fatal objection. The 'counterpoise' plan was not one that imposed grave restraint on the Czar, was not one that penally humbled him, and for that very reason of course would not fasten upon him the badge of acknowledged defeat, nor serve the Allies — like a trophy—to show abroad amongst men instead of a captured Sebastopol.

Compared with the mere adduced 'reasons,' the actual

The Conference being one carried on simultaneously with the strife on the Chersonese, it followed of course that the 'reasons' adduced on each side by the disputants were only as chaff to the grain

* The Porte seems to have so judged in 1871, for it assented with apparent willingness to the change then made; and indeed so early as 1867 Fuad Pasha was willing that the Neutrality principle should be given up. Beust, ii. p. 106.

CHAP. XII.

stress of the 'motives.'

when compared with the weight of the motives—the motives derived from stern war—which, although not acknowledged in words spoken out between foes at a table, were still swaying every man in the Conference-room at Vienna.

There was one—only one—tract of ground (and this a tract not more extensive than many an English 'estate') where the actual condition of things was such as to give the Czar strength in negotiating with his Western assailants. What humiliations by sea and by land he or rather his sire had been suffering one after another until the 25th of September 1854 we know and need not repeat; but then—as though heaven were granting that sagacious, old prayer which besought it to darken the minds of her enemies*—she saw her invaders abandon their conquests made on the Alma, saw them slowly descend from the vantage-ground of the Mackenzie Heights, saw them coldly 'lay siege' to the more than half-open town left deserted (as they themselves saw) by Mentschikoff's fugitive army, and then day by day, week by week, saw the genius of Todleben forcing them to expiate their hapless resolves; so that having first utterly wasted the precious fruit of their victories, they now, after six months of trench-work, stood faltering and baffled before him.

But this was not all, was not even perhaps the worst part of that distressing predicament in which the Allies had contrived to plant their now powerful

* Quoted *ante*, vol. ii. p. 484 in 5th edition.

CHAP. XII.

armies; for, whilst failing to carry Sebastopol, and even losing ground in their efforts, they also, we know, were so circumstanced as to be unable to raise the siege. They, or more strictly speaking a part of them, which was not to have a less strength than 90,000 men,* stood picketed fast in the front of an uninvested fortress drawing men and supplies without stint from the powerful Empire of Russia, and held fast too on ground which no man, if he could help it, would ever choose as a battle-field. With forces thus not only baffled, but held in strict, perilous durance, the Western Powers of course were under strong, tempting motives, which, unless counterbalanced by any opposing reasons, might well make them look somewhat wistfully at a prospect of peace; and especially might this be the case with Louis Napoleon in those hours when he was not intending to lead his army in person; for his power of weighing on the Continent by means of an army in readiness for strife on ground nearer his frontiers was suspended, or immensely impaired by the exertions of power he had made and was making in a distant part of the world.

So far, therefore, the condition of things gave strength to the Russian negotiators; but on the other hand, it must be remembered that—because unacquainted with that 'Mission' of General Niel which was sheltering the Sebastopol garrison from all decisive attacks—they believed the Flagstaff Bastion, and with it the Fortress itself, to be in closely im-

* See *ante*, cap. xi.

minent danger; whilst also, we know, they were pressed by the grave, disheartening care of which I am going to speak. The effort required for sustaining this defence of Sebastopol by aid of troops marched from vast distances was one of a cruelly exhausting kind. The stress of the marches alone inflicted losses believed to have reached enormous proportions, and seemed destined to be always continuing until the siege should end; * so that Russia from that point of view might seem to be driven towards peace by painfully cogent motives; and, when known in St Petersburg, the losses sustained by the Russians under the April bombardment would tend to load the same scale; but then again it appeared that the very excellence of the Sebastopol defence (which seemed of course even more admirable than it really was to those who believed that since February the place had been sincerely besieged †) put an obstacle in the way of her yielding; for how to agree that the prowess which had hitherto saved, and still was maintaining the Fortress, nay, making it perform the exploit of holding its besiegers in duress, should so far, after all, go for nothing, as not to afford a good warrant for refusing consent to harsh terms?

* The late Duke of Newcastle (who, however, since February 1855 had ceased to be War Minister) once imparted to me his estimate of the losses which the Russians *by their marches alone* had sustained. His estimate was so vast that I am unwilling to reproduce it.

† General Niel landed in the last week of January; but the effect of his paralysing mission may roughly be said to have commenced with the month of February.

CHAP. XII.

The Allies having hitherto failed in their tedious siege, and being moreover entangled by their own hapless policy between the seas and the Fortress, might well be under strong motives inclining them to obtain a peace, if only they could do this on terms not offensive to their own self-respect; but considering all that had passed—the armies, the fleets, the great united armadas, despatched to far-distant shores in the face of a gazing world—it would hardly be possible for them to escape public ridicule if they were to end the war without either taking Sebastopol, or winning instead some advantage that could be shown to the scorners as a worthy equivalent for the fortress they had striven and failed to reduce.

On the whole, one may say that what seemed likely to govern the balance between peace and war were—not material interests, but—questions of war-like 'honour.'

Of course, the resolves of Diplomatists engaged in the Conference-room might well be from time to time swaying beneath the impulsion of tidings fresh come from the seat of war; but it so happened that the period occupied by the critical part of the negotiation (from the 26th of March to the 21st of April), was not one in which events greater than a prolonged bombardment were occurring on the Chersonese Heights. On the other hand, it is true that during several months, the general tenor of the strife for Sebastopol had been bitterly disappointing to the Allies. Their

armies—unaware of the cause—had long been under the palsy inflicted by General Niel's Mission, and their claims to dictate a peace ran counter, one cannot deny, to the almost ridiculous fact that (in the matter of gaining or losing ground) an ascendancy at the seat of war had been maintained—not, this time, by aggressive besiegers, but instead by an audacious garrison; for Canrobert, ever since February, had been more or less patiently submitting to the enemy's counter-approaches.

The Powers in arms against Russia could of course rest high hopes on the forces, now great in numbers, with which they were preparing to operate at the seat of war; but the critical period of the peace negotiations included a time when it seemed to be only too certain that the French Emperor, going out to the Crimea, would there command his forces in person. This measure—for two sets of reasons, some based on his absence from France, others drawn from the idea of his presence at the head of an army—was regarded as one of ill omen.

The young Czar desired peace; but in the face of Opinion at home growing up more and more into strength since the death of his sire, he did not venture to purchase the blessing he sought by any too obvious surrender of what—inopportunely—his envoys were pleased to call 'sovereign rights.'

Failure of the Peace negotia-

On the 21st of April, Prince Gortchakoff declared in Conference the persistent refusal of the Czar to

CHAP. XII.

tions carried on between the belligerents.

limit his number of war-ships in the Black Sea; and thereupon Lord John Russell and M. Drouyn de Lhuys announcing that their instructions were exhausted, the negotiations directly maintained between Russia and the other belligerents fell into a state of abeyance, though the actual close of the Conference was delayed during several weeks.

Writing to Lord Raglan from Vienna on the 23d of April, Lord John Russell said:—'I hope you may 'succeed better in making war than I have in making 'peace. The Russians have rejected our propositions, 'and we would not hear of theirs. There remains 'one faint hope from a proposition to be made to 'our Governments by Austria, and it is but a faint 'one, so we must look to your sword to cut the way 'to peace.'

IV.

The Austrian proposals.

Anticipating that failure of the direct peace negotiations which took place on the 21st of April, Count Buol some three days before had been submitting for the consideration of the Western Powers three separate plans, all intended to meet the exigency of the Third Condition; and it was from the last of these plans—one originated by M. Drouyn de Lhuys—that Lord John derived the 'faint hope' which we saw him impart to Lord Raglan.

Allusions to a subsequent

Months later, when under the reign of a new French Commander the prospects of the war had

CHAP. XII.

attack on Lord John Russell.

been changed, and when none without study and access to much of what was then secret knowledge could acquire a true idea of the questions encountered in the previous April, a sudden disclosure of the reception accorded to Count Buol's proposals roused in England an outburst of anger against Lord John Russell—an outburst that sprang from the notion of his having tried to make peace on terms not sufficiently honourable to the Western Allies; and accordingly, whilst in close union with the rest of the Cabinet, and no less determined than they were to press on the war with due vigour, he all at once found himself marked, and singled out as the object of a great House of Commons attack—an attack by a concourse of men rightly eager to denounce any symptom of unworthy flinching in war-time, but ill supplied with the knowledge required for sitting in judgment on him whom they fiercely arraigned.

Compelled by reasons of State to observe on some subjects a well-guarded reticence, whilst also deeply moved at the sight of a planned insurrection against him led on by men prized as his friends,* Lord John met the storm of disfavour by resigning his office, and giving in the House what of course could be only an imperfect account of the grounds on which he and his colleague, M. Drouyn de Lhuys, had judged it their duty to act.

* Those members of the Government in the House of Commons who were not members of the Cabinet—*i.e.*, those who did *not* know the truth—acquainted Lord John that they could not support him against the coming attack.

CHAP. XII.

I am happily absolved from the task of examining the debate of the 16th of July, because it took place at a time beyond the set bounds of my narrative; but no such excuse can relieve me from the task of dealing with facts which occurred in the April before; and a feeling against injustice (whether caused by ill design or mistake), with besides, I may own, a regard for the memory of Lord John Russell, has made me imagine it right — not indeed to controvert his assailants but—to show the true import and bearing of the measure which gained his support, leaving others intent on the 'Life' of a high-hearted English statesman to contrast the attack made against him in the House of Commons with what, as I say, is the truth.

The Third of the three Austrian plans.

The third of the three proposed plans which Count Buol had submitted was so far entertained by both the First French and the First English Plenipotentiary that Lord John Russell on the 18th of April was able to speak of it thus:—'M. Drouyn de Lhuys 'called upon me in the evening [the evening of the '17th], and we drew up together a rough outline of 'the proposals to be made.

'It will be seen that, supposing the second propo- 'sition to be rejected as well as the first, the value of 'the third depends on three things:

'1. Guarantee by all the contracting Powers of 'the territory of Turkey.

'2. A system of counterpoise in the Black Sea.

CHAP. XII.

'3. The limitation of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea to the number of ships maintained before the war, under pain of war with the Allies. I confess it appears to me that if this third system can be made an ultimatum by Austria, it ought to be accepted by the Western Powers. In saying this I may seem to contradict my former opinions. But in fact I do not retract those opinions. The system of limitation I believe to be far better than that of counterpoise. But the question is between an imperfect security for Turkey and for Europe and the continuance of the war.

'Should the Government of her Majesty in concert with that of France be of opinion that such a peace can be accepted they will instruct Lord Westmoreland accordingly. If not, I hope to be allowed to be heard personally before a final decision is made."*

At a later hour on the same day Lord John mentioned the reserve of Count Buol on the question which asked what Austria would do, if all her proposals should be rejected by Russia, and then added:

'If her Majesty's Government should decide to accept any one of the three systems which the Conference can agree upon, I think they should insist that Austria should make the rejection of all three a *casus belli* with Russia.'†

It was only on that condition (which Austria, although at first hesitating, soon resolved, it appears,

* Lord John Russell to the Earl of Clarendon, 18th April 1855.

† A second despatch of same date from same to same.

CHAP. XII.

to accept*) that Lord John entertained the proposal; and accordingly in weighing the measure, we must treat it as a scheme which, if leading under one supposition to peace, had also its warlike aspect.

The plan was one resting in part upon the principle of 'Limitation,' and in part upon the principle of 'Counterpoise.' For the avowed object of shielding the Sultan's dominions from Russian aggression, it was perhaps on the whole more effective than the plans which the Western Powers had put forward in the Conference-room;† and even as regarded the object of publicly humbling Russia, and winning in that way a 'trophy' to show in lieu of Sebastopol, it was not altogether deficient; for, to prohibit the Czar from increasing the number and weight of his ships of war in the Euxine beyond a given fixed limit, was in principle nearly the same as forcing him to lessen their strength.

With respect to its bearing on the more immediate course of events, the plan showed alternative prospects:—it would either drive the Czar to make peace on the terms we have seen, or compel him to face a new enemy already in arms on his frontier.

The deadlock in front of Sebastopol.

To understand the bitter need that there was for bringing about some sharp change in the existing condition of things, one must turn from Vienna to

* 'En nous engagement à la soutenir au besoin par les armes une 'solution,' &c. Count Buol to Count Colloredo, 20th May 1855, communicated to Lord Clarendon, and not by him on that point questioned. Eastern Papers, No. xv. p. 21.

† The experience of 1877 has a close bearing on every such question

the Chersonese, and recall some idea of the state of the war at the time. When Lord John Russell penned his despatches of the 18th of April, the prospect of taking Sebastopol by dint of the siege as then constituted was judged to be beyond measure dismal. * General Canrobert, as ever since February, was still enduring the conquests wrested from him one after the other by Todleben's counter-approaches. It is true the great April Bombardment was day by day going on; but, there being, as we have seen, no resolve to follow it up by assault, the bark portended no bite. There was not at the time any prospect that (except by the coming of Louis Napoleon to the Crimea) General Canrobert would be superseded in the command of the French army.

The French Emperor and the English Government agreed in believing that Sebastopol would never be taken by means of the siege then on foot against the South Side of the place.† They hoped indeed that its ulterior fall might be compassed by successful operations in the field; but even over that prospect (which was only, after all, one dependent on the issue of a future campaign) there hung a dim, lowering cloud; for the command of the French army, and with it a dominant voice in the ordering of the intended campaign was, as then understood, to be exercised by Louis Napoleon personally; and this with a plan in his head which our War Minister pronounced to be 'wild' and 'visionary.'‡ What

* See *ante*, caps. vi. vii. viii.

† See *ante*, cap. ix.

‡ See *ante*, ibid.

CHAP. XII.

brightened this part of the prospect was only the gleam of a hope that plans which seemed absurd in design might perhaps be transformed into measures of wholesome strategy when encountering the test of real war. The Allies, we know, were so circumstanced that, whilst thus unable to carry the Fortress, they could not, if they would, raise the siege. What on earth could they do? Must they go on without any hope except the one based on a future campaign under Louis Napoleon's strategy, or else on the chance of a battle, if the enemy should be pleased to attack them in the execrable position they occupied with their backs to the cliffs and the sea? It may seem to be almost incredible, but still is strictly true, that powerful and victorious armies had come to be thus strangely hampered. The predicament was one that appealed—not surely for any weak yielding on a question of honour or principle but—for such a new move against Russia as might either untie or cut through the hard Sebastopol knot by a fresh exertion of power.

The need that there was for effecting a new move against Russia.

Knowing well that their armies lay thus strangely tethered and hampered in front of Sebastopol, the Governments of Paris and London were bound of course, if they could, to find and bring into play some new, some extrinsic force calculated to work the needed change; but either they did not observe the path of duty before them, or did not see how to pursue it. Yet the lever was ready, and only awaiting their touch. Far from having declared that they would not negotiate without first taking

The lever to be found at Vienna.

Sebastopol, they had chosen to say the contrary, and for weeks, as we have seen, had been busily treating with Russia in the Conference-room at Vienna on the basis of the accepted Four Points; whilst also—and still in Vienna—they had at their side an Ally not yet plunged in the physical strife, but acknowledging his obligations under the Treaty of the 2d of December, and not only willing, but even indeed almost eager to fix the easy conditions on which he would take the field. Yet with these means of action at their command, the Rulers in Paris and London did not even make any endeavour to use the power they held; and were so far from helping by statesmanship to ease the dead-lock on the Chersonese that they wilfully matched it by causing another dead-lock at Vienna.

Neglect of this by the Rulers in Paris and London;

The First French and First English negotiators engaged in the Conference were, however, more alive than their Governments to the exigencies of the military predicament. M. Drouyn de Lhuys had the merit of conceiving and maturing the plan which—unless forcing peace on the Czar—would effectuate a mighty diversion in favour of the hampered besiegers; but Lord John also—always eager and strenuous—was not the man to stand idle, and see the Conference fail, without anxiously turning his thoughts to the armies besieging Sebastopol, and trying by a stroke of diplomacy to help them in what at the time seemed painfully difficult straits.

but not by De Lhuys and Lord John.

CHAP. XII.

In the effort to achieve this great good, he found himself able to act in close, friendly concert with M. Drouyn de Lhuys, and to agree with him in believing that for the objects they both had in view the Proposal in question was apt. What concession it exacted from the Western Powers was—not so much concession to the enemy, but rather concession to Austria—concession made at her instance, and of that honourable sort which a belligerent may of course rightly make to a great independent Power when persuading it to join in a war.

The tendency and value of the measure.

Irresistibly cogent in either one or the other of the opened alternatives, this measure was so far from erring in the direction of weakness that it rather perhaps might be censured as offering too strong a remedy; for, supposing the Czar to resist this new pressure, the whole empire of the Danube would be brought at once into the strife; and, considering the defection of Prussia, there was some ground for saying that, to compass the armed intervention of such a Power as Austria, with its consequent extension of the area of the war, would be almost a ruthless act.* Be that as it may, the whole measure was at all events one which would either force peace on the Czar by the leverage of an Austrian ultimatum, or else, if he still should resist, bring Austria against him in arms.

On the question that asked which alternative would be the more likely to follow, opinions were not agreed.

* This, *e.g.*, was the idea of Sir Edward Lytton-Bulwer, expressed in the debate of July 1855.

M. Drouyn de Lhuys and Lord John were both strongly inclined to believe that this measure, because sharply barbed with the Austrian ultimatum, would force a peace on the Czar; whilst Count Buol, with perhaps better means of forming a judgment, was rather disposed to conclude that the Czar would hold out, and bring Austria into the war;* but in one way or other the plan could not fail to take effect with great cogency.

If, instead of displaying this cogency, the measure had really been one which people understanding its import could honestly censure for weakness or undue concession to the enemy, it would not have found any favour with M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, and would never have been harboured a moment in the mind of Lord John Russell.

De Lhuys.

Lord John, as all knew in his day, was a man of great intrepidity, was even from time to time rash, and prone to spring into action under simply spontaneous impulses that often enraged and distracted the anxious drill-sergeants of 'Party,' yet endeared him to those of our people who prefer, after all, a true man to any disciplined aggregate. He was capable of now and then coming to a bold, abrupt, hasty decision not duly concerted with men whose opinions he ought to have weighed; but for courage, for high public spirit, no statesman in Europe surpassed him.

Lord John Russell.

* Eastern Papers, xv. p. 30.

CHAP. XII.

Reception of this plan by Lord Palmerston's Cabinet;

When Lord John returned to England on the Sunday, the 29th of April, he found his colleagues wholly unwilling to resume the negotiations for peace; and at a Cabinet held the next day, they avowed an unqualified reluctance to accept the Austrian plan; but it was necessary of course that our Government, though desiring to act in that sense, should first take counsel with France.

and by the French Emperor.

And it proved that Louis Napoleon disagreed with the English Cabinet. On the 27th of April at the latest, and possibly two or three days before, he had found himself obliged to abandon his idea of going out to the Crimea; and thenceforth, it would seem, for a time he was anxious that the war should cease. 'I don't know,' he said to Lord Cowley, 'what is 'thought of the English generals, but ours seem to 'know little of European war, and this double com-'mand is fatal.'*

Accordingly, on the last day of April, the Emperor was in a good mood for listening with favour to his Minister M. Drouyn de Lhuys, who had brought him back from Vienna what was called the Third Austrian Proposal, and now advised its acceptance as a measure that would secure what he judged to be a safe and honourable peace. The Emperor and his Minister examined the project together, made in it some changes which were afterwards pronounced to be wholesome, and determined that in this matured state it might be imparted to our Government as a measure approved by France.

* Senior's Conversations, vol. i. p. 338 *et seq.*

Lord John Russell apprised of all this wrote from London to M. Drouyn de Lhuys:—

'MY DEAR COLLEAGUE,—I congratulate you on 'the successful interview you had with the Emperor. 'The plan has been made much more simple and 'less objectionable. . . . We shall, however, 'deliberate and decide to-day upon the propositions 'of your Government. It is the highest satisfaction 'to me that we have agreed, and, I trust, shall con- 'tinue to agree, on the great principles upon which 'the future system of Europe is to be established.'*

Pronounced difference in the counsels of the Western Powers.

There was now therefore rife a clearly pronounced division in the counsels of the Western Powers; for, excepting its powerful member newly come from Vienna, the whole of Lord Palmerston's Cabinet was still as before keenly anxious to abstain from further negotiations, and firmly go on with the war; whilst—intent on an opposite policy—not only the French Emperor himself, but also his Minister for Foreign Affairs, and with them Lord John Russell, were, all three, desiring to accept the Austrian proposal, and make it the basis of peace.

The French Emperor and Lord Cowley.

After having matured the proposal in the way we observed, the French Emperor intimated his wish to see the English ambassador. Lord Cowley found the Emperor smoking in the garden, and was asked by him to 'walk up and down with him, and 'talk the matter over.'

* 4th May 1855.

CHAP. XII.

'I think,' the Emperor said, 'that it is a good 'arrangement. What think you?'

Desiring of course to support the opposite opinion, as the one entertained by his Government, Lord Cowley answered: 'Well, it does not appear to me 'that the Russian preponderance in the Black Sea 'will be materially affected.'

'Not,' replied the Emperor, 'by our having now 'a right to keep an equal force there?'

Lord Cowley briefly and ably adduced for his answer some arguments like those we heard used at Vienna against the 'counterpoise' plan.

The Emperor replied: 'I will talk the matter over 'again with Drouyn de Lhuys.'

Speaking then from a sudden impulse, Lord Cowley made what was certainly a very abnormal suggestion, saying, 'Would there be any objection to 'my being present?'

'The Emperor looked a little surprised, and then 'said, "Certainly not;" and he appointed an hour 'for the next day.'

Marshal Vaillant:

A soldier of other days, a survivor of the Moscow campaign, now a Minister wielding the regathered power of France in another war against Russia, Marshal Vaillant was destined to utter the few magic words which would shape the then course of her history, overrule a new 'Emperor Napoleon,' and govern the march of events.

'When I arrived,' says Lord Cowley, 'Vaillant 'was in the antechamber, and Drouyn de Lhuys 'with the Emperor.'*

The Marshal and Lord Cowley were soon introduced, and the Emperor begged Drouyn de Lhuys to explain the grounds of his arrangement.

Drouyn de Lhuys did so at considerable length. 'I think,' said Lord Cowley, 'that he talked nearly 'half an hour. The Emperor seemed to go along 'with him, and, when he had finished, said to me, 'Are you not satisfied?'

'My only answer,' said Lord Cowley, 'is to beg 'your Majesty to ask Marshal Vaillant whether he 'thinks that this arrangement will really effect the 'purpose of the war—the putting an end to the 'preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea and the 'Bosphorus.'

his words;

'The Emperor turned to Vaillant. "I am not a '"politician," said Vaillant, "but I know the feel-'"ings of the army. I am sure that if, after having '"spent months in the siege of Sebastopol, we re-'"turn unsuccessful, the army will not be satisfied."'

their sudden effect.

'The Emperor then turned to Drouyn de Lhuys 'and said: "Write to Vienna and break off the '"negotiation."'

Thus in less then a minute the Emperor reversed his decision.

'All turned,' said Lord Cowley, 'upon Vaillant's 'presence. Louis Napoleon was pleased with the

* Senior's Conversations, vol. i.

CHAP. XII.

'peace, and would have adhered to it, if Vaillant 'had not frightened him.'*

Resignation of De Lhuys.

M. Drouyn de Lhuys from the first had been closely identified with the measure thus suddenly discarded; and before the evening closed, he sent in his resignation. The Emperor wrote to his Minister, and asked him to reconsider this step; but M. Drouyn de Lhuys replied somewhat drily, and repeated his determination to quit the Government.†

Unaccepted resignations of Lord John Russell.

Unanimity after the 5th of May of the English Cabinet.

Because finding himself at variance with the rest of the Cabinet on the question of the Austrian proposal, Lord John Russell twice tendered his resignation to Lord Palmerston;‡ but when the Emperor's second decision was imparted to our Ministers, there remained, of course, no room for difference about the course to be taken by the then reunited Governments of France and England. Abstaining from further negotiations, they could not, as all saw, do otherwise than vigorously go on with the war; and, since Lord John agreed with his colleagues in the conclusion thus reached, he was left without a ground for insisting that his last resignation should be accepted. He continued to be a member of the Government, and of what from the 5th of May downwards was a closely united Cabinet.

* Senior's Conversations, vol. i.

† Both these notes were shown by the Emperor to Lord Cowley.—Ibid.

‡ Lord Palmerston in House of Commons, 16th July 1855.

CHAP. XII.

The Governments of France and England once more in substantial accord.

The Emperor's new and sudden decision brought him back all at once into what was substantial accord with the bulk of the English Cabinet; for, although he might thenceforth be fighting on the ground pressed upon him by Vaillant, whilst the English might hold that their object was still that of forcing on Russia the hated principle of 'Limitation,' the immediate resolve of both Governments was in each case the same. Both resolved to go on with the war.

Opening for the new policy suggested by Vaillant.

Taking place, as we saw, on the 21st of April, the suspension and virtual rupture of all direct negotiations with Russia had set free the Western Powers from their engagements to treat for peace on the basis assigned at Vienna. There accordingly was room for advice that tended to shape a new policy—a policy based in great part upon the feeling of soldiers; and perhaps one may own that of all the public men seeking to guide the two Western Powers at this conjuncture the most clear-sighted was he who declared himself no politician. Inspired by his knowledge of what the soldiers were thinking, and not borne down by the cares of over-anxious diplomatists, Marshal Vaillant proved able to see that due warlike persistency in a long-pursued enterprise was the Greater, the true Essential, and that clearly the lesser object—to be afterwards, however, attained by first attaining the greater—was that of contriving a shield for the imagined Turks of the future by dint of parchments and words. He saw that France and England—France and England allied and in arms — could not meet the vast exigency of their repute among

The soundness of Vaillant's conclusion.

CHAP. XII.

nations, or, as Frenchmen would say, of their 'honour,' by coming home in the face of a bitterly scornful world with all their mighty armada, and a bundle of mere Russian promises to show abroad among men instead of a captured Sebastopol.

In effect, Marshal Vaillant's words prayed that the war should go on, without offering any new aid, as the Austrian proposals had done, towards the object of making it prosper; but the value of his counsel depended on reasons more lofty, more general than those which only point to 'expediency' of the humbler and narrower sort.

The course of duty prescribed to D. de Lhuys and Lord John.

It was otherwise of course with diplomatists discharging fixed, ascertained duties. When considering the Austrian proposal on the evening of the 17th of April, M. Drouyn de Lhuys and Lord John Russell were not free to harbour a thought of taking the soldier-like course which we heard Vaillant afterwards counsel. Far from having any shadow of warrant to act in such a direction, they had come to Vienna instructed to negotiate a peace on the basis then already laid down, and to bring Austria under engagements for joining at once in the war, if peace should not so be attained. Some may think, as I do, that for Powers like France and England, the simple, the manful insistence recommended by Vaillant was better than all the best meshes contrived by diplomatists; but we must remember that speaking in Paris after the virtual rupture of the negotiations, and only professing to breathe the sentiment of the army as distinguished from the

opinions of politicians, the Marshal was free to advise on large and paramount grounds not open to men at Vienna in the middle of April who, like Drouyn de Lhuys and Lord John, had had laid upon them the task of negotiating a peace, without either awaiting the fall of Sebastopol, or insisting on its surrender by Russia as one of the terms to be dictated.

Men plainly forbidden by Duty from acting on Vaillant's principle, and obliged to observe what I have called a 'humbler' sort of 'expediency,' could not well fail to see the advantages of that 'Third Austrian plan' which would either have forced on the Czar a better peace than the one for which France and England had toiled in the Conference-room at Vienna, or else would have brought against him—brought against him in arms on his frontier—a new and powerful enemy; but obeying the letter of their instructions which pointed exclusively to 'Limitation' in exclusion of the 'Counterpoise' principle, M. Drouyn de Lhuys and Lord John took care to keep themselves free from any approach to entanglement with the Austrian Government; and did no more, after all, than impart and recommend the proposal to their respective Governments.*

What they did.

In what did they err? The mistake of that countless multitude which long afterwards brought down storms of wrath on the head of Lord John was caused, it would seem, in great part by the oddly

* Lord John even, it seems, abstained from telling the Austrian Government that he would take that last step.

CHAP. XII.

refracting way, and wrong, inverted order in which events became known; for the rupture of the direct negotiations with Russia was soon after disclosed; whilst the Austrian overture of the 17th of April was—rightly—kept secret. The secrecy had lasted some weeks, and our Government and our people alike had gladly bidden farewell to all negotiations, and were simply intent on the strife, when an indiscreet statesman—not English—revealed the Austrian overture, affecting moreover to show, though not doing this at all perfectly, the action thereupon taken by Lord John Russell. The secrecy maintained by our Cabinet was wholly 'State secrecy,' altogether disjoined from any personal wish for its concealment entertained by Lord John; but people not seeing this fancied that they had made a discovery, proving him to have flinched at Vienna from what was the plainly right course. How far this was from the truth we have been able to see.

The chief cause of the mistake was, however, a sheer want of knowledge. In that time of war, ample reasons of State forbade the disclosures required for showing the truth, the whole truth.*

Of course, the same valid State reasons which enforced silence on the Cabinet sealed also the lips of Lord John; and accordingly his resignation did nothing towards giving him freedom of speech.

* No one, for instance, could discuss the policy of accepting the Austrian proposal without laying stress on the prospects of the Sebastopol siege; and this, of course, was not a subject with which to entertain the public—a public that included the enemy.

CHAP. XII.

The House of Commons on the 24th of May entered upon a great debate on the subject of the war, including the Conferences, and (refusing to say with Mr Gladstone that it still cherished hopes of peace founded on parleys open through Austria) came after many days to a vote which expressed its regret for the failure of the negotiations carried on at Vienna, and declared that it would continue to give every support to her Majesty in the prosecution of the war until a safe and honourable peace should be attained.

Vote of the House of Commons.

From the day, the 21st of April, when France and England declared their instructions exhausted, no real negotiation took place in the Conference-room; but allocutions intended to operate upon the opinion of Europe were there made on the 26th of April and on the 4th of June. Prince Gortchakoff on that last day made speeches which tended to show that his Government, though approving in the main of the Austrian proposal, would still always refuse to accept that part of its terms which sought—in a measure—to limit his master's 'sovereign rights.'*

The Conference kept formally open until the 4th of June;

If this were true it would follow (as Count Buol had said he believed) that the acceptance of the Austrian proposal by the Western Powers would have drawn Austria into the war.

On the 4th of June 1855, this long open Conference closed.

and then closed.

* Eastern Papers, xiv.

CHAP. XII.

V.

Change brought about by the rejection of the Austrian proposals.

Austria set free to change her course.

When rejecting all the proposals put forward by Austria, France and England did more than forego the powerful aid she had proffered. They at once set her free to abandon that attitude of menace—armed menace—by which—without going to war—she long had been pressing on Russia. It then became plain to Austria that the Western Powers were going beyond what she had pronounced to be the just exigencies of the Four Points, and (by virtue of that discretion which they had taken good care to reserve) were continuing their war with a mind to either capture Sebastopol or else wring from the Czar such a cession of what his men called 'sovereign 'rights,' as might serve like a 'conquest' to show instead of the untaken fortress. Austria judged that under these conditions 'the responsibility,' as she called it, of going on with the war no longer attached on the Russians. She did not deny—no one did—that upon this matter, the question which asked how the Western Powers should deal with the obstinate fact that they still were defied by Sebastopol, France and England must judge for themselves of the course which their self-respect dictated, and go on with the strife, if convinced that this was what Honour required; but Count Buol rightly judged that, to aid them in the pursuit of an object so peculiarly their own, he ought not to involve his own country and bring it into a war—a war that must needs have

The course she rightly took.

been formidable even when she began to arm in the previous year, but had since been rendered trebly embarrassing by the defection of Prussia, by the ceasing of those Russian encroachments of 1853 which had given offence to Germany, and besides by the fact that, with mighty forces entangled in a far-distant region, France was hardly for the moment so able as she might otherwise be to support the Empire of Austria against encompassing enemies.

What defeated the efforts of diplomacy to end the war at this time was, in short, a point of soldierly honour arising from the frustration of efforts to carry Sebastopol; and the notion of assuming that Austria, who had had nothing to do with the siege, should be expected to act as a Power affected by this special exigency, was of course altogether untenable.

Consistently with the new determination, Austria hastened to relieve her Exchequer from any further continuance of the burthensome sacrifices she had been making in preparation for war, and abandoned that attitude of armed menace which she long had maintained against Russia.

It was natural that this course of action, though no less right than wise, should provoke great impatience in England, and the more so perhaps since it happened that Lord Palmerston, then our Prime Minister, had long shown towards the much-challenged Empire of Francis Joseph a curious, persistent antipathy. With, however, a store of good humour which seemed inexhaustible, the now dis-

CHAP. XII.

arming Austria clung fast to the notion of her being joined to the Western Powers by some gentle sort of Alliance. Not fearing the High Court of Ridicule, she even gave them her blessing, and, whilst calmly receding herself from the perilous brink on which she had long been standing, she expressed a wish that kind Fortune might smile on her friends in the field.

The steady, the accurate righteousness with which Count Buol steered his way through the sea of troubles he crossed was nothing less than a feat marked by wisdom, by skill, by a never-ceasing adherence to the dictates of honour; but, of course, proved immensely exasperating—for so human nature commands—to the belligerent powers; and besides, there was theme for the satirists—intent on their laugh—who could say what they liked of 'the 'blessing,' 'the moral support,' quaintly offered to eager combatants by a friend keeping clear of the strife; but it still remains true that the course of action taken by Austria in all these transactions was thoroughly loyal and right.

* Eastern Papers, No. xv. p. 22.

APPENDIX.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I.

NOTE 1.—*Outnumbered by tens of thousands.*—Including their field-army outside (which could freely either enter or quit the fortress at the will of the commander), the Russians had, at this time, a strength of about 108,000; whilst—unless there were counted some 11,000 Turks (whom Canrobert and Lord Raglan had not learnt how to use with effect)—the French and the English together were only about 61,000 strong.

NOTE 2.—*On General Bosquet's front.*—Of the defensive works on Mount Inkerman, some were constructed by the French, some by the English, and full accounts of them will be found in the French and English Official Narratives, in Niel, p. 150, and in the Journal of the Royal Engineers, p. 50 *et seq.* For account of the works of countervallation on the French left, see Niel, pp. 98, 99. My reason for avoiding details on these matters is that the works were not destined to be put to the proof by attacks.

NOTE 3.—*Only by hundreds.*—The average number of workmen kept employed by the French was in November only 693 by day, and 475 by night; in December only 835 by day, and 628 by night; and in January only 417 by day, and 192

by night.—Niel, pp. 105, 123, 133. The numbers of Englishmen whom our people proved able to keep employed at their works was far, far more scant, as will be seen by the 'Trench Journal' appended to the Journal of the Royal Engineers, p. 159 *et seq.*; and although it is true, as shown by the same Journal, that small bodies of Turks were also employed, these unhappily had suffered so cruelly from privation and hardship as to be unfit for much work. See the 'Remarks' column in the above-mentioned Trench Journal.

NOTE 4.—*Of the Flagstaff Bastion.*—The policy followed by Todleben when thus closing the gorges of his defensive works was at one time much questioned by scientific critics; but on the other hand, was defended by the great engineer with brilliant clearness and vigour. It was my good fortune in 1869 to be with him on the site of the Malakoff, and to learn from him there his full reasons for having closed its gorge.

NOTE 5.—*Minor pieces of ordnance.*—Three small mortars. The French military authorities at the time endeavoured to keep this loss a secret.—Lord Raglan to Duke of Newcastle, Private, December 13, 1854.

NOTE 6.—*Only* 290 *men.*—Journal Royal Engineers, Part I., p. 82. And see the note, from which it results that, to meet the requirement of a calculation 'universally admitted' as just, the guards of the English trenches should have had a strength of not less than three-fourths of 18,000—*i.e.*, not less than 13,500 men.

NOTE 7.—*At the object kept always in sight.*—Journal Royal Engineers, Part I., pp. 51, 52, 56, 57, 62, 70, 71, 71-2, 85, 128, 136-7-8, 138-9, 139, 140-1 141-2, 143-4, 144-5.

I believe I might add largely to the number of these references by citing the very numerous papers in the handwriting of Sir John Burgoyne which I have before me.

NOTE 8.—*Against the Malakoff front.*—Journal Royal Engineers, p. 72; Niel, p. 139. The more recent of the counsels thus tendered by Burgoyne and resisted by the French were submitted in Memoranda dated respectively the 11th and 20th of December.

NOTE 9.—*Happily able to accept the condition imposed.*—Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, January 2, 1855. There is no mention of this agreement in either of the Official Narratives, the Siége de Sebastopol by Niel, or the Journal of the Royal Engineers. Both the compilers date the new departure—the new resolve of the French to operate against the Malakoff—from the 1st of *February* (when the French Council sat), or the 2d of the same month, when the decisions of the previous day were put into the form of written Instructions. By happening to remain unacquainted with the arrangement of the 1st of January, General Niel was of course dispensed from the obligation of explaining the delay which extended from the 1st of January to the 1st of the following month.

Though not based on any actual reopening of the question already decided, the unanimous vote of the Council of the 1st of February was a little bewildering; and coupled with the whole month's inaction which had followed the New Year's Day, it had the effect of bringing a curious error into the official narratives of two great nations. Any reader of either the Official Siége de Sebastopol or of the Official Journal of the Royal Engineers, would imagine that the decision was on the 1st of *February*, whereas it was really on the 1st of *January*. The error was not of the kind termed 'clerical,' but one such as might have been committed by some simple village chronicler who on learning the date of a mere *coronation* had given it as the date of the *accession*. I suppose that one of the great Official Narratives must on this point have copied from the other; for otherwise, there would be something wonderful in such a coincidence as that of the two great records making, each of them, so big an error as that of striking a whole month out of the calendar. M. Rousset, I

see, is aware that the engagements took place in *January*, and he cites for proof Bizot's letter of the 12th of that month, vol. ii. p. 31.

NOTE 10.—*Till the latter part of the month.*—*Ante*, vol. vi. pp. 388, 389. It was only on the 21st of January that—threading his way at last between two of the most ugly perils that well could beset a commander—Lord Raglan obtained the aid of French troops in relief of our overtasked soldiery.

NOTE 11.—*Words described as 'Instructions.'*—The Official compiler of the Journal of the Royal Engineers stated (p. 85) that the Council of the 1st of February was a 'General 'Council of War'; but that was not the case. The Council had before it Burgoyne's suggestions in writing, and amalgamated some of them with the project approved, but was exclusively French. The decisions of the Council embraced the whole plan of operations then adopted by the French, and were recorded in a paper dated the next day—the 2d of February. A copy of this paper is given in the 'Journal,' p. 148.

NOTE 12.—*Other mortal then living.*—General de Todleben once did me the honour to speak to me of the zeal with which at one period of his life he had devoted himself to the science of mining, and I remember how greatly he astonished me by speaking of the enormous proportion of his time which he then used to spend underground.

NOTE 13.—*Spreading system of countermines.*—In anticipation of what the French might attempt underground, the Russians began countermining in the beginning of November; but it was only at the close of the month (when they had had time to draw the inference stated in the text) that their system of countermines began to assume 'vast' proportions. —Todleben, p. 596.

NOTE 14.—*Unleashed a camouflet.*—For want of any true

English word sufficing to express what is meant, the word 'camouflet'—the war-miner's 'whiff'—has been received into the vocabulary of our military engineers. It means an explosion which the miner or counterminer drives into his antagonist's galleries *without* disturbing the surface of the ground above.

NOTE 15.—*The intervening Mamelon.*—The English began their new (8-gun) battery No. 9 (the 'King Battery') on the 13th of February (Royal Engineers, Part II., p. 34); and soon afterwards received admirably efficient aid from the French, who also at about the same time, if not earlier, began toiling at the 15-gun battery No. 1 (the 'Artilleur Battery') which was to be constructed on a western slope of Mount Inkerman.

NOTE 16.—*Did the work.*—After showing how the French entered upon the work, the Official Journal of the Royal Engineers says: 'The order, silence, and regularity with which 'the work was conducted under the superintendence of a cap-'tain of the French Engineers was very remarkable.'—Journal of Royal Engineers, Part II., p. 34.

NOTE 17.—*Destroying the Inkerman Bridge.*—Niel, p. 104. This act of Mentschikoff's was not one that relieved the Allies from any apprehension they might have of another 'Inkerman'; for the bridge (as was proved on the morning of the great battle) could be restored in a few hours.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV.

NOTE 1.—*With their blows.*—Todleben did not consider that the artillery of the enceinte defending the Faubourg could usefully interpose; and the fire from that quarter — more

dangerous perhaps to the Russians than to the French—took place without his sanction. The ships were to fire, but *only up the ravine;* so that, if the French, inclining towards their right, should dip down into St George's Ravine they might incur fire, whilst the Russians, if duly cautioned against the dangers, might of course take care to avoid it.

NOTE 2.—*Lost their way in the darkness.*—Niel states that a part of the attacking force lost its way; and uses language which seems to show that the Zouaves on the flanks did *not* do so, thus showing apparently that the centre column must have been the part of the force from which the lost troops had separated themselves.—P. 155.

NOTE 3.—*Had been victoriously achieved.*—Having been authentically, though erroneously informed of these good tidings by direction of General Canrobert, Lord Raglan imparted them to the Secretary of State in a despatch of the 24th February 1855, which has been published.—Sayer's Collection, pp. 100-1. After having been undeceived himself, Lord Raglan undeceived his Government.—Private Letters to Lord Panmure, 24th and 27th February 1855, and Despatch to Secretary of State, March 31, 1855. Before sending off his despatch of the 24th February, Lord Raglan saw General Canrobert, and was by him assured that up to that time, he had received no further report.

NOTE 4.—*Without a simultaneous advance on the Malakoff front.*—Even in the absence of that extraneous information which we owe to recent disclosures it would hardly be possible to imagine that this proposal was made seriously. The proposal was so extravagant that its rejection, or rather its non-acceptance, seems not to have been thought worth recording.

NOTE 5.—*Not again to attempt to drive the enemy from their new works.*—Considering that the French had been so lately accepting the guidance of Burgoyne in the most momentous

of questions, an English reader will observe with surprise the tone thus adopted towards him in council by French Generals. There was apparently a feeling on the part of the French (see the words of Bizot quoted elsewhere) that Burgoyne had persuaded them into dangerous ventures, and it would seem that they therefore felt angrily towards him; but I imagine that their peremptory manner of treating his counsels on the 6th of March might be traced in great measure to his loss of official status. They knew that he had been recalled; and being great respecters of official, as distinguished from personal authority, may have thought that they owed less deference than before to one who, in literal strictness, was now only a skilled amateur.

NOTE 6.—*For which he was yearning.*—General Canrobert is living, and entitled, of course, in all fairness, to command full attention if inclined to controvert the authorities on which I base my statements, or to show that in the interval of eleven days, between the 30th of March (when Lord Raglan wrote) and the 10th of April (when Canrobert expressed himself as anxious to be attacked by the enemy), there had occurred such a change of circumstances as to account for the actual inversion of his opinions and feelings on the subject of 'another Inkerman.' It is true that in the interval, Omer Pasha, with from 15,000 to 18,000 men had come up to the Chersonese, but it is hardly imaginable that the accession of that force alone would account for so enormous a change as the spring from despondency to a warlike longing for the advantage of being brought to battle by the enemy.

NOTE 7.—*With grossly inadequate means.*—'With most 'inefficient means in men and material'—words written under the sanction of Sir John Burgoyne himself, if not with his own hand.—Journal of Royal Engineers, Part I., p. 87.

NOTE 8.—*Were 'postulates' rather than facts.*—Sir John Burgoyne's military status in the Crimea was that of a Lieutenant-General on the Staff of Lord Raglan's army,

with orders to *advise* respecting the conduct of engineering operations; and, though not in terms constituted the Commander of the Engineer force, he was practically armed well enough with all a Commander's authority. Accordingly the arrangement making him an adviser instead of a Commander did not stint him in *power;* but apparently it much influenced his *habits of thought and action.* There is, after all, something in words; and plainly a request from the Chief saying, 'What do you *advise?*' is not quite the same as one saying, 'What do you offer to *do?*' In the first case, the officer consulted would be almost led into the practice of treating the question of 'means' hypothetically, saying virtually, 'If the army can 'afford strength enough for 'the purpose, I advise such and such a course;' whereas, if asked to say what, as a Commander of Engineers, he would offer to *do,* his mind would be turned more distinctly to the question of 'means.' I owe my perception of this difference to the tenor of Burgoyne's written counsels taken in conjunction with the afterwards disclosed want of means for giving effect to them. Thus, for instance, on the 23d of November he writes an elaborate and most able memorandum, given in the Journal of the Royal Engineers (Appendix, No. 34), and after mentioning the suggestion, the Journal adds, '*The additional means that would be required for this 'operation appeared to be the only impediment to its adoption.*'

This sample—and it is quite a fair sample—shows that, in Sir John Burgoyne's mind, the all-important question of 'means' was not so determined beforehand as to secure a basis for his opinion, but left to be dealt with afterwards.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V.

NOTE 1.—*14th February* 1855.—This letter was printed by Niel in his 'Siége de Sebastopol' (p. 478 *et seq.*), but rele-

gated to the cold shade of the Appendix, and not shown by the writer to be anything more than one of the numberless documents by which able men in those days were prone to record their opinions, it seemed to have no more than an 'academical' importance until the recent disclosures by M. Rousset invested it with a new significance, and showed it indeed to have been something very real indeed—to have been, in short (when approved), a full Memorandum of the principles on which Niel conducted his mission.

NOTE 2.—*Begun and continued.*—The brief, though valiant night-attack of the 24th of February, under General Monet and Colonel Cler was arrested in mid-course *by the hand of authority, and was never renewed;* so that taken as a whole, it can hardly be treated as a substantial exception to the statement in the text, and may rather perhaps be regarded as confirmatory of the general rule then repressing the enterprise of the French army.

NOTE 3.—*Lasting success.*—We may take it for granted, I trust, that the disloyal expedient of maintaining secrecy against Lord Raglan must have been distressing to General Canrobert as well as to General Niel; and it seems probable that if Lord Raglan, when sounded on the question of investing Sebastopol,* had proved to be of the same opinion as Niel, all further concealment on the part of the French would have been gladly abandoned, so that thenceforth the Allies might have been frankly acting together with the same immediate objects. Lord Raglan, however, showing no such inclination, the French still went on concealing from him their adoption of the Emperor's plan—the plan on which they were acting!

NOTE 4.—*By 'approaches.'*—That the arrangements recorded on the 2d of February were, as I have called them, a 'retreat' on the part of the French from the engagements of the 1st of January, and that Niel caused the change is

* At the Conference of the 4th of March. See *ante*, pp. 74, 75.

shown by General Bizot, who wrote to Vaillant, 8th February 1855: 'The Général [Niel] a jugé trop aventurée l'attaque 'de vive force à faire immediatement sur la tour Malakof, 'et à la suite d'un conseil tenu en sa présence chez le Général 'Canrobert, il a été décidé que nous allions entreprendre de 'ce côté les travaux d'une attaque plus rapprochée.'—Quoted Rousset, vol. ii. pp. 32, 33.

NOTE 5.—*To Vaillant, 8th February* 1855.—Writing on the 8th of February (when it was understood that Niel was on the point of returning to France), Bizot says to Vaillant, the Minister of War: 'Le Général Niel qui doit s'embarquer 'sur le prochain courrier va vous arriver parfaitement édifié 'sur nos travaux, sur nos chances de succés comme sur les 'chances contraires, et sur les difficultés de la position que 'nous ont faite nos alliés. Il a essayé vainement de galvan-'iser leur inertie, et il a reconnu que si nous voulions ar-'river, il faillait marcher pour eux, et pour nous.'—Quoted Rousset, vol. ii. p. 32.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI.

NOTE 1.—*Grave affair.*—'General Niel regards it [the 'opening of the fire] as a grave affair, and so in truth it is.' —*Lord Raglan to Secretary of State, Secret, March* 31, 1855. It may be asked why, if the French commander was privately resolved to abstain from assaults, either he or his messenger Niel should regard the bombardment as a 'grave affair'; but to those who have read the foregoing fourth chapter the answer will readily occur. General Canrobert was possessed with a notion—not shared, I believe, with Lord Raglan —that the bombardment would or might provoke a second and more terrible 'Inkerman.' Thus, when he and Lord Raglan concurred in regarding the intended bombardment as a 'grave affair,' they concurred on different grounds—

General Canrobert concurring on the ground last stated, and Lord Raglan concurring because he took it for granted that the bombardment would be followed by assaults.

Niel personally, as was afterwards known, strongly objected to the bombardment; but mainly, it would seem, on the ground that it might draw on the Allies into acts of vigour which he thought would prove vain.

Then again it perhaps may be asked why the French expended time and resources on this immense cannonade without meaning to follow it up. They may possibly have cherished some hope that the mighty fire brought to bear on the enemy's earthen defences would either force the enemy to capitulate, or retreat from the place without fighting; but another and yet stronger motive for resorting to this cannonade was the evident necessity which forced Niel and Canrobert to cover the state of abeyance in which they were keeping the siege by *seeming* to do something great. Considering the unmeasured pretension of superiority that is made by belligerents who go and lay siege to a fortress, it was all but impossible for the French, under the eyes of deriding Europe and angry France, to go on presenting the spectacle of continued impotence without at least trying to mask it by something like a semblance of action; so that even if Lord Melbourne himself had been associated with Niel in his 'mission,' he could hardly have made good his stand against the remonstrant declaring that 'something ought 'to be done.'

The necessity of veiling a plot which enjoined long delays must of course have been seen from the first; and, unless I mistake, the expedient of using bombardments as sedatives to allay the very natural impatience of angry observers was in the mind of General Niel on even that early day when he wrote to the Emperor his letter of the 14th of February.*

NOTE 2.—*See Appendix, Note* (2).—The battery was one pierced for *six* guns, and *six* guns accordingly—each a 32-

* Printed in Niel's Siége de Sebastopol, p. 478 *et seq.*; and see *ante*, p. 118.

pounder—had been placed in readiness to be taken down; but during the delays above spoken of, one of the guns was removed from its fellows, and planted in another battery: so that the number destined to be actually taken down was *five*. —Journal Royal Engineers, vol. ii. p. 129.

NOTE 3.—*Enthusiasm.*—Shortly before the first bombardment—the one of the 17th of October '54—I was (with two or three others) on the heights overlooking Sebastopol, when we saw a small trading-vessel approach from the north and draw nearer and nearer to the batteries of the Severnaya. These at length opened upon her, but—under very light breezes—she steadily pursued her course, drawing gradually nearer and nearer to the mighty sea-forts. Those of the Severnaya soon opened upon the little vessel with a vast prodigality of power, and we saw the shots dropping around her, but all apparently failing to strike her, for there was no sign of displacement in her rigging or otherwise. She seemed to have a charmed life.

Her course had brought her very near to the batteries of the Severnaya, but was bringing her very much nearer to the even more powerful sea-forts on the south side; and the incident then became highly exciting to the people of Sebastopol. We saw them assemble in numbers on the top of one of the forts with the evident intention to give themselves the amusement of seeing the little vessel surrender, or else undergo her fate, and be sunk by the mighty artillery of the Alexander and Nicholas Forts.

The vessel however glided on, and the great South Forts opened upon her, making havoc with the waters surrounding her, and most markedly with the sea in her wake, but still failing (like the North Forts before) to touch the charmed life.

The wonderful calmness with which she held on her course seemed beyond measure admirable to all, but especially so to a French officer at my side, who supposed the little vessel to be English, and was thrown into a frenzy of enthusiasm. Accosting me impetuously, he declared that the Queen of England was bound to bestow the very highest

of all her Orders on the heroic commander of the little sailing-vessel.

The vessel escaped all the wrath of the Sebastopol seaforts, and was ultimately brought into one of the Allied ports by a steamer sent out to aid her. It turned out that she was an Austrian vessel laden with hay for the use of the Allies; but a derelict not having a single human being on board her.

Her captain and crew finding that they could not get an offing, had abandoned the vessel, first setting her sails and her rudder in such way as to give her any chance there might be of sailing past the entrance of the Sebastopol Roadstead, so that the instance as stated in the text became an example of 'composition of forces' so closely resembling a human resolve as to be actually mistaken for heroism.

But an even better sample of the 'resemblance' I speak of may be found nearer home—may be found in a little child's boat when sailing 'close-hauled,' and 'beating up' against adverse breezes. She seems to have volition, to have resource in emergency, to be angry if 'taken aback' or allowed to 'fall off,' to be swift in repairing the fault, and to show something like manful pride when again she 'comes up to the 'wind.'

NOTE 4.—*Camel.*—Every child that has twirled a teetotum, or driven a top, is familiar with the vigorous *leap* that his toy will suddenly take if he touches it whilst spinning round.

NOTE 5.—*Battery.*—I suppose that the *sobriquet* must have been meant to indicate that Captain Oldershaw, like the ideal Zouave, was eager and resolute in fighting; but what other resemblance could have been traced by the inventor of the nickname one does not easily see.

That abstinence from self-celebration which I have ascribed to Captain Oldershaw was not characteristic of the Zouave.

NOTE 6.—'*To retire.*'—Except Captain Shaw, who thus came down towards the close of the five hours, and put an

end to the fight, no officer of rank superior to that of Captain Oldershaw was present in the battery from first to last on the 13th of April. Nor did Oldershaw from first to last receive any orders except those given him the night before by Captain Oldfield, and the above-mentioned order from Captain Shaw.

NOTE 7.—*To Oldershaw.*—Captain Oldfield, it seems, took pains to inform himself of the tenor of the fight to which his order had given rise, and addressed to Captain Oldershaw on the subject a letter which commemorated his fight in terms of high praise.

That letter has been mislaid; but I am not without hope that it will be found. Captain Oldfield was killed on the 17th of August 1855.

NOTE 8.—*Came to an end.*—If a man, although wounded, is still not so gravely disabled as to be prevented from appearing on parade the next day, there is never a certainty that he will be included in the Returns of 'casualties,' and indeed, as is commonly known, the question whether, in such a case, he will be 'returned' or not, is often a matter of accident or even a matter of choice. Thus, for instance, Lord Cardigan, who had received the thrust of a lance at the battle of Balaclava, did not choose at the time to have it 'returned' as a 'wound,' and accordingly his name did not figure in the list of 'wounded.' He used afterwards to express his regret that he had not taken the opposite course, and caused his name to appear in the 'Return' of officers wounded.

Thus it may and does constantly happen that the number of men really wounded exceeds the number of 'wounded' appearing in the official Return; but in this peculiar fight where 'assaults,' if so one may call them, were being ceaselessly made by cumbersome sand-bags sent flying under the impact of cannon-balls, it was plainly to be expected that the difference between the facts and the figures would be abnormally great; for there was many a man who, when felled by the blows thus delivered, lay prostrate under the shock in

an utterly helpless state, yet so free, all the while, from any injury of a lasting kind as to be able to appear the next day on parade, and avoid being ever put down in any Return of the wounded.

The number of gunners thus stricken without being therefore 'returned' was rendered so much the greater by the feeling which animated them. Every man in those days of keen expectation strove his best to keep out of hospital, being not only willing but eager to remain with the force under arms.

NOTE 9.—*Strength of only three men.*—Not going with any minuteness, or even any aim at strict accuracy, into the painful reckoning of his killed and wounded, Captain Oldershaw (in a letter written on the day of the fight) said only that 'half' his men were *hors de combat*, and Sir Gerald Graham, as we saw, accepted the same rough estimate. It is to the kindness of Mr De Vine (whose bravery, as we saw, was so conspicuous on the day of the fight) that I not only owe the far more complete statement contained in the text, but also other careful details which give it additional weight.

In considering Mr De Vine's statement, it should be remembered that reinforcements had come down, and that therefore, when showing the unstricken remnant of *the original combatants* present in the battery to have been reduced at the last to three, he did not thereby represent the battery to have been at any time manned by a force so diminutive.

Mr De Vine is now one of our public servants, holding responsible office in India.

NOTE 10.—*Any less formal document.*—Without using the language of positive assertion about matters of official business occurring in times now long past, I may say what I understand to have been the mischances from which there resulted this chasm in the Headquarter records. Lord Raglan, it seems, had determined that reports on the subject of these fights in the batteries should be made to him—not by any artillery officer, but—by a field officer of the Royal

Engineers, and this special duty was judged to be one of so much importance that no less a man than Major Gordon, R.E. (the commander of the Right Attack) was charged with the task. He, however, whilst repelling the sortie of the 22d of March, was wounded in the right arm, and for that reason, though not quite at first, it was ultimately found necessary to relieve him from the duty and to appoint a successor. His successor was Major Bent, R.E. (one of the heroes of the battle of Giurgevo), who, entering upon his new duty on the 14th of April, made that Report of the fights of that day in the No. VII. and the No. VIII. batteries, which, as is shown in the text, was warmly approved by Lord Raglan. But between the time when the state of Major Gordon's wound prevented his performing the task, and the time when his successor (Major Bent) entered upon his new function, there was an interval, which included the 13th of April—the day of Oldershaw's fight; and thus it resulted that Major Gordon's wound was the first of the mischances which led to there being this chasm in the Headquarter records.

With his admirable clearness and mastery of military business, reinforced by the knowledge he had in a general way of the fights maintained in the English batteries, Lord Raglan, in all probability, would have discovered the error and hastened to repair it; but then, on the part of the artillery authorities, there occurred those official mistakes (shown *post*, in the sub-notes to Note 15) which made it appear (though erroneously) that Lord Raglan's commendations applied to the fight of the 13th as well as to that of the 14th. The last and clenching mischance (if so one may call it) was the resolute silence of Captain Oldershaw, who persevered, as we saw, in abstaining from any attempt to set the authorities right.

NOTE 11.—*Under him.*—I don't except Captain Shaw, who came down at the close of the fight; because what he witnessed was—not the struggle itself, but—the havoc it had wrought.

NOTE 12.—*To make the truth known.*—Considering what I

have above written on the subject of General Oldershaw's long-maintained abstinence from self-assertion, it may fairly be asked whether his reticence has been continued down to this time, and whether I have been honoured by communications from him on the subject of his fight of the 13th of April in the 'advanced No. VII.'?

The circumstances are these: I some time ago received a letter from the Provost of Worcester College, Oxford—a gentleman then wholly a stranger to me—in which he did me the honour to suggest that the fight maintained by his cousin Captain (now General) Oldershaw on that 13th April 1855 might deserve my attention; and he kindly enclosed to me copies of two interesting letters on the subject.

When afterwards bending my mind to the period in question, I became persuaded that it would be right for me not only to speak of the fight in question, but even to lay some stress upon it; and—preparing a series of questions—I ventured to ask that the Provost would have the kindness to submit these to his gallant relative.

I suppose that the administration of those questions may have caused the General to reconsider his old determination; or indeed he may well have judged that whilst still persevering in his resolve to avoid all complaint, he was not therefore bound to withhold information from one who was only a writer endeavouring to learn the truth.

Be that as it may, the General (who had been previously an entire stranger to me) was so kind as to give me either orally or in writing all the information I from time to time demanded from him; and it need hardly be said that the knowledge I was thus allowed to acquire extended beyond the mere 'points' on which I assailed him with questions. All these communications passed between us in the summer and autumn of the present year 1883; for it happily chanced that the General was then 'home on leave.'

From the only other combatant officer taking part in the fight, that is Lieutenant, now Major-General Simpson, I have also had the advantage of receiving indirect communications through General Oldershaw. My great obligations to Gen-

eral Sir Gerald Graham, R.E., V.C., K.C.B., who (then a Lieutenant) was present and wounded in the battery, are so amply made evident in the foregoing narrative that I here need hardly do more than repeat to him my cordial thanks.

NOTE 13.—*Engaged under them.*—In the teeth of official documents, I am able to say this with certainty because having before me the report of Major (now Lieutenant-General) Bent, R.E., with the words appended to it by Lord Raglan—words showing that he warmly adopted the Major's account, and made it the basis of the thanks and the praises next about to be mentioned.

On the 15th of April, Lord Raglan wrote: 'Colonel Dacres 'will be so good as to communicate to Captains Henry and 'Walcott and express to them not only my approbation of 'their conduct and that of the officers and men under them, 'but my warmest thanks for their gallantry and steady per- 'severance in discharge of their duty;'* and on the 17th wrote thus in a despatch addressed to the Secretary of State:—'The guns of the Russians have been turned upon 'some of our advanced works in vast numbers, and in [one

* In the Official Memorandum of the 28th of April which promulgated these thanks and praises to the army, the 'Brigadier-General 'commanding' the Artillery stated that they were 'Remarks made by 'Field-Marshal Lord Raglan on the conduct of Captains Henry and 'Walcott and the officers and men under their command whilst manning 'the guns in Nos. VII. and VIII. Batteries, Left Attack, on the morn- 'ings of the 13*th* and 14th April;' and, since neither Captain Henry nor Captain Walcott was engaged in either of the advanced batteries *on the* 13*th*, there must have been an official imbroglio. The Memorandum also promulgated officially a list of 'the officers referred to;' and at the head of it, as if he were an officer under Captain Henry or Captain Walcott, whom Lord Raglan had (by reference) thanked, there appears the name of—of all people in the world!—the name of Captain Oldershaw, who was not engaged in either of the advanced batteries on the 14th, but *was* engaged—and, as we have seen, to some purpose—in the 'advanced No. VII.' on the 13th of April.

The Memorandum is a singularly *compact* little parcel of official mistakes. I count *eight* of them—and all of a seriously misleading sort—compressed with much neatness into the space of only an inch or two.

'particular instance the injury sustained by a particular bat-
'tery] was so great that the unremitting exertions of Captains
'Henry and Walcott, and the gallantry and determination of
'the artillerymen under their orders, alone enabled them to
'keep up the fire, and to maintain themselves in it.'*

NOTE 14.—*The fire of the two 'advanced batteries.'*—The afternoon reliefs passed through these ordeals with the same valorous persistency as the detachments which they had replaced; and this was well manifested by the continuance—until after dark—of the fire maintained by our people; but, so far as I know, the particulars of those struggles were not recorded and I must own myself to be as yet unacquainted with even the names of the officers who (along with the men they had under them) proved able to keep the advanced batteries unsilenced from half-past one until nightfall.

NOTE 15.—*Defence of Sebastopol.*—That General Todleben was likely to be free from all bias tending to warp his judgment in the direction it took may, I think, be inferred from the circumstances under which he had acted. By the almost sudden creation of stupendous batteries the great Engineer had undertaken to do battle with the siege-guns of the Western Powers; and it would obviously have been delightful to him to be able to say that he had succeeded. Accordingly, where he could with truth say so, he did, and with evident joy. Thus in his pardonable exultation at the ascendant which his great Redan had obtained over our English batteries, he used even the largish word 'victory.' What obliged him to say—to confess—that he had failed to prevent the French from opening a fit path for assault of the Flagstaff Bastion was plainly his knowledge of the truth.

* Upon the supposition that Lord Raglan *must* have been adverting to the combats of the 14*th*, the words I have placed within brackets should have been altered by making them plural. Captain Henry and Captain Walcott did not fight together in any 'one' battery.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII.

NOTE 1.—*Might not after all be unwise.*—Niel, p. 239. 'Le 'front Malakoff étant dévenu le véritable point d'attaque,' p. 213; and elsewhere, p. 239, he speaks of the siege against the Town front as if it were 'secondaire.' With our knowledge of the 'motive' there was for keeping French enterprise down in a state of abeyance (see *ante*, cap. v.), we of course must naturally yield less attention than might be otherwise right to any 'reason' assigned for taking the preordained course. Niel (who does not always so frame his language as to make it clear whether he is expressing the view of the French military authorities generally, or simply his own personal opinion) can hardly have meant to say that the siege against the Town front had become so decisively 'secondary' as to warrant acquiescence under the enemy's encroachments in that part of the field.

I have myself, it is true, represented that, considering the immense value of the Malakoff position, an earnest conflict maintained in that part of the field would more and more draw to itself the energies of both the besiegers and the besieged; but this was not originally the idea entertained by the French themselves, and the paper they framed on the 2d of February 1855 was so worded as to exclude with great care any notion that the siege against the Town front was to lose any part of its importance. From that day, accordingly, until after the opening of this period, the siege against the Town front (which was conducted by the formidable Pélissier) continued to be pressed on with vigour, whilst the new siege—the one against the Malakoff—was maintained, as we have seen, with so little resolution that—far from advancing—it retrograded.

NOTE 2.—*Somewhat unscrupulous.*—The Czar naturally protested against this unprovoked Declaration of War by Sardinia; but except on the principle that sanction for *any*

opinion can be gathered from the teachers of 'International 'Law,' a denouncer, treating Cavour's intervention as 'un-'scrupulous,' could hardly be recommended to look for support in his Grotius.

When once war is constituted between two or more Powers, the quaint, old, unheeded admonitions against 'unjust wars' don't aim, I think, even in theory at the conscience of any other Power disposed to join in the fray.

NOTE 3.—*Always thoroughly cordial.*—I had the honour at one time of being acquainted with the late Count Genoa de Revel,* the Sardinian officer acting at the English Headquarters as an organ of communication with General la Marmora, and it was always in terms of devoted, enthusiastic attachment that the Count used to speak of Lord Raglan.

NOTE TO CHAPTER VIII.

NOTE 1.—*To be attempted.*—It must not be supposed that a note of this kind was based upon that general opinion which in terms it might seem to express; for the English on such occasions did not sit in judgment on the opportunities of assault which the French might really have before them, nor *vice versâ*. The French would simply say, 'we don't yet see our 'way to assaulting those defences which we confront,' and their announcement would be treated as conclusive; as (reciprocally) would be that of the English, who at their huge distance from the Redan, had of course no intention of sending infantry against it otherwise than in concert with assaults simultaneously undertaken by the French.

Lord Raglan, I believe, had no independent means of be-

* A brother of the late Count Adrian de Revel, long the Sardinian Minister at the Court of St James's, and greatly loved and esteemed in this country.

coming acquainted with the full extent of the havoc wrought on those Works which were attacked by the French siege-guns, and he—almost necessarily—received his impressions on that subject from General Canrobert. Of course Canrobert's representations as to the failure of the bombardment seemed to be every day receiving confirmation, because (owing to the repairs every night) the enemy's defences each morning seemed as strong as they had been at the first.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IX.

NOTE 1.—*This part of the plan.*—Lord Panmure afterwards learnt that Sir Colin Campbell had pronounced the Mackenzie Heights to be virtually impregnable, and became very angry with Lord Ellenborough, through whom Sir Colin's opinion had been made known in London.

NOTE 2.—*Take effect by surprise.*—Speaking of the force he had meant to lead up from Aloushta, the Emperor wrote that it was sufficient 'pour détruire toute l'armée Russe qui pouvait 'être surprise, et prise à revers avant d'avoir par réuner toutes 'ses forces.'

It is hard to see how the Emperor (in the then listening state of the world) could have hoped to see his plan take effect by way of surprise like that famous Marengo campaign which he seems to have had in his mind.

NOTE 3.—*Or otherwise into the sea.*—After speaking of what was to be first achieved by his Army of Diversion, and of its capture of Simferopol, the Emperor says: 'On s'empare de 'cette ville, et on y laisse une garnison suffisante, ou bien on 'occupe sur la route que nous venons de parcourir une bonne 'position qui assure les derrières de l'armée. Maintenant de 'deux choses l'une; ou l'armée Russe qui est en position de-

'vant Sébastopol abandonne cette formidable position pour 'venir à la rencontre de l'armée qui s'avance du coté de 'Batchi Seräi, et alors la première armée d'opérations sous 'les ordres de Lord Raglan la pousse l'épée dans les reins, et 's'empare de la position d'Inkerman;* ou bien les Russes at-'tendent dans leur lignes l'arrivée de l'armée qui vient de 'Simféropol, et alors celle-çi s'avance de Batchi Seräi sur Sé-'bastopol en appuyant toujours sa gauche aux montagnes, 'fait sa jonction avec l'armée du Maréchal Raglan qui s'est 'avancé de Baidar sur Alhat, repousse l'armée Russe, et la re-'jette dans Sébastopol, ou dans la mer.'

I make this extract from the Emperor's later exposition of his plan; but nearly, if not quite the same words are contained in his Letter of the 27th of April.

NOTE 4.—*To avert the catastrophe.*—As regards the siege-army, this is amply shown by the statements contained in Cap. XI.

As regards the force invading from Aloushta, we may say that (unless upon the improbable supposition of the enemy's being taken by surprise) the 'Army of Diversion' would have to do what is commonly understood to be all but impossible, that is, to debouch from mountain-passes in the face of an enemy both powerful and fully prepared.

As regards the '1st Army of Operation' confided to the English Commander, we must see that the more deeply Lord Raglan might become engaged in trying to execute the Emperor's plan, the more impossible he would find it to come in good time to the rescue of either the 'Siege Army,' or 'the 'Army of Diversion.'

* The Emperor, adopting Russian nomenclature, means the Heights on the *right* bank of the river, which I call the 'Old City Heights.'

NOTES TO CHAPTER X.

NOTE 1.—*Into full play.*—The laying down of the cable had been completed a week before; but till afterwards, the appliances needed for making it carry a message were not brought into due order.

From the beginning of the War, land-service wires of the electric telegraph had been occasionally used; but till after the laying down of the submarine cable, they did no more than reduce the transit by about three days—*i.e.* for example from about thirteen days to ten.

NOTE 2.—*Could not divine.*—A note accompanying Canrobert's communication of the telegram said: 'Les deux chiffres conservés sont faux, et n'ont pû être traduits.' One learns from the Emperor's letter of the 7th of May to Lord Cowley that by '45' was meant 'defensive position,' and by '450,' 'attack the Russian army.'

NOTE 3.—*In their rear.*—Under many conditions not hard to imagine, the howl of the Imperial City might have presaged grave troubles for the Allies; and it was well that the puissant Ambassador, after an absence of several days, opportunely returned to his charge. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe had been visiting the Crimea. He landed there on the 26th of April, and left its shore in the evening of the 3d of May.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XI.

NOTE 1.—*Campaigning Plan.*—This Paper describing itself as 'Le Plan de Campagne élaboré par S.M. L'Empereur Na-' poléon III.' is marked 'Très secret,' but not dated, and was handed by Canrobert to Lord Raglan on the 14th of May. It

is much more compressed than the Letter of the 27th of April, and Canrobert, I see, in his note, calls it the 'résumé of the 'Plan.' It purports, I see, to assign 70,000 instead of 60,000 men for the defence of the siege-works; but the larger figure was meant, I believe, to include the 10,000 'indisponibles' mentioned in the previous exposition, and did not therefore import any change. This last Exposition discards the words which had described Lord Raglan's 'Army of Operation' as 'destined to seize the Mackenzie Heights,' but in other respects it does not differ very materially from the Letter of the 27th of April. Both these Papers were frankly imparted to our people—the first one of the 27th of April to our Government, and the second, as we saw, to Lord Raglan. One or other of the two Papers was brought out by Colonel Favé.

NOTE 2.—*To act in the field.*—Canrobert seems to have understood—but I am sure erroneously—that Lord Raglan whilst in the Conference was willing to split his force into two armies, and did not until the next day refuse to do so.

NOTE 3.—*The hopes he had entertained of being attacked by the enemy on the reopening of the bombardment.*—His words were:—'La non-attaque de nos lignes extérieure par l'ennemi 'a la réouverture du feu, attaque qui paraissait très-probable, 'et sur laquelle j'avais fondé des espérances d'un succès plus 'décisif que celui d'Inkerman.' To learn how conspicuously this disappointment at not being attacked contrasted with Canrobert's former moods, see *ante*, p. 84.

END OF VOL. VII.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.

00029907

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC

WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018